

Works. I understand that the East Block is now included within the buildings of parliament and that extensive renovations are being carried out. Can the minister advise this House or this member what is contemplated with regard to the use of the East Block now that the extensive political machine, the PMO, is being removed? Who will move in? All Canadians would like to know what is being done and what the cost will be in this period of restraint.

Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, as yet no definitive decision has been taken in relation—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Drury: Ask a stupid question. A committee has been appointed under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Abbott to define the needs of the parliamentary precinct. In anticipation of that report, we are not taking decisions as to the ultimate disposition of various elements of the parliamentary precinct.

Mr. Nowlan: I prefaced my question by directing it "to the quiescent Minister of Public Works". The fact that no definitive decision has been taken illustrates my preface. My supplementary question relates to history. I know the minister, in another capacity, was on Parliament Hill at the time of the last change in government. It was only the change in government that saved the West Block from the intentions of the cabinet under Mr. St. Laurent. Will the minister assure the House that as far as the exterior of the East Block is concerned nothing definitive, like demolition, will take place?

● (1130)

Some hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Nowlan: You may laugh, but that was what Mr. St. Laurent was going to do with the West Block. Can the minister assure us that when definite plans are made any work to be done will be done to the interior and that the exterior will remain as it is?

Mr. Drury: I think I can reassure the hon. gentleman that there will be no demolition carried out by this government. I wish I could feel as confident with regard to the alternative government.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): We shall soon have a chance to say no.

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FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

EQUALIZATION PAYMENTS—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE NO PROVINCE WILL RECEIVE LESS UNDER NEW PROPOSAL

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Two days ago, referring to the new equalization formula presently being negotiated, the hon. gentleman gave an assurance that overall equalization payments would not be less than the present figure of \$2.2 billion. Since each of the options presented by the federal govern-

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ment involves less than that amount, and since the minister has stated that these proposals were for demonstration purposes only, could he say what increase he is prepared to consider in total equalization payments so that no province would be worse off under any new scheme than it is at present?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): As I have indicated both to the conference and in responses in the House, the overall impact of equalization would not, in general, be less. The impact varies, of course, from province to province and I am not sure I can give the guarantee the hon. lady is seeking. Very often, particularly if there is a shift in provincial earnings, there would be a change. However, the overall impact would be the same. I suppose the best example of what I mean would be Saskatchewan. That province might well, through economic progress, move into the category of being a "have" rather than a "have not" province. If that were to happen it would, of course, be receiving no equalization payments at all.

Miss MacDonald: I realize the minister may not be prepared to give a dollar figure in relation to his commitment, but since his objection in April to the present rate of growth of equalization payments was that it was outstripping such indicators as the growth in federal revenue and the growth of the gross national product, would he be prepared, for instance, to consider a growth rate in equalization payments at least in line with one of those two indicators?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): In general terms, we set out the view that these transfer payments should grow at a rate not greater than the growth in the gross national product. That would be the trend.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

INVESTIGATION BY UNITED STATES ANTI-TRUST AUTHORITIES OF CANADIAN URANIUM PRODUCERS—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources—

Some hon. Members: And others.

Mr. Gray:—I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister. In view of the fact that Canadian production, sale and export of uranium are under federal jurisdiction and regulation and that two of the Canadian producers are federal Crown corporations, what is the government doing to prevent possible extra-territorial application of United States law within Canada arising out of the current investigation by U.S. anti-trust authorities into the affairs of uranium producers both inside and outside the United States? In addition, could he or the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs tell us whether the government was formally notified by U.S. authorities in advance of their investigation as is provided for in several agreements between the United States and Canada?