

given the government of the United States reason to believe that they favour such a proposal?

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): The answer to the first question is in the negative. The answer to the second is that as far as I am aware the government has had no communication with the government of the United States with respect to the matter. Perhaps I should qualify that remark by saying that the government had no knowledge of any such statement being made until, like my hon. friend, its attention was directed to the reference to the statement which appeared in the press. After seeing what was set forth in the statement, the government did make inquiries concerning the statement, simply to ascertain whether or not it was authentic. I am not aware that anything more than this has passed in the way of correspondence between the two countries on this matter.

#### SOLDIERS' DEPENDENTS

##### INQUIRY AS TO OPERATIONS OF DEPENDENTS' ALLOWANCES BOARD OF TRUSTEES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. L. CHURCH (Broadview): May I ask the Minister of National Defence whether the government have come to any new decision about paying a cost of living war bonus to soldiers' dependents. Both the minister and the Prime Minister on November 14 told me in the house that during the recess regional boards to consider cases of hardship would be set up in military districts, which is of no use whatever. Surely something should be done about it. What is the new policy about bonuses to soldiers' dependents? There is considerable suffering in Toronto already this winter and nothing is done.

Hon. J. L. RALSTON (Minister of National Defence): Perhaps my hon. friend uses an inappropriate term. I think he is referring to the dependents' allowances board of trustees, which was announced by my colleague the Minister of Finance last November. The board has been appointed and is being set up. For the information of my hon. friend I may add that the chairmen have been selected already in the larger centres, and the committees are now being organized. If my hon. friend has not seen it already I should be glad to send him a copy of the order in council under which the board is set up, giving the powers and general principles under which they act.

Mr. CHURCH: Has any regional board met in Toronto, and how many cases has it reviewed?

Mr. RALSTON: I do not think regional boards have met in Toronto, so far as I know. I happened to be talking to the chairman yesterday on the telephone.

Mr. CHURCH: Money would be better spent in that way than on the referendum.

#### INTERNMENTS

##### PETITION OF CERTAIN PERSONS INTERNED IN HULL, QUE.

On the orders of the day:

Mr. ANGUS MacINNIS (Vancouver East): On November 14 the hon. member for North Battleford (Mrs. Nielsen) presented a petition on behalf of certain interned persons. According to the *Votes and Proceedings* of January 21, the petition has been examined and found in order. According to paragraph 713 of standing order 68 it is now in order to ask for the reading of the petition. I suggest that this be done, possibly at the next sitting of the house if it is not available now.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): There is in my mind at the moment a question as to whether this is not a matter that properly relates to the last session of parliament rather than to the present session, and I should like to consult the Clerk of the House in the first instance as to whether a matter relating to the last session might not have to be renewed in a formal way before it could be taken up anew in the house.

#### JOINT DEFENCE

##### POSSIBILITY OF SENDING CANADIAN SOLDIERS TO ASSISTANCE OF UNITED STATES

On the orders of the day:

Hon. H. A. BRUCE (Parkdale): In view of our joint defence commitments with the United States I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether units of the sixth division would be available to be sent to the assistance of the United States in the event of an attack on the coast of that country.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): I think the appropriate persons to make reply to a question of this kind would be the military authorities, who no doubt have given every consideration to the matter. They may regard it as advisable not to make any public statement at the moment, but certainly this matter is one that should be referred to them in the first instance.