

Inquiries of the Ministry

He told us earlier that there would be exchanges between the U.S.S.R. and Canada in the technical, scientific and cultural fields. With regard to cultural exchanges, can he say that there is no question of exchanging some of the freedom we enjoy here in Canada for the slavery that prevails over there?

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Edmonton West.

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FINANCE

NATURE OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS—DATE OF MINISTERS' MEETING AND SUBJECTS ON AGENDA

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Would the minister advise the House precisely at what level the conference between representatives of his department and their counterparts in the provincial administrations will take place and what will be the agenda of the discussions this week? Do they tie in with the announcement made by the minister last week or do they have to do with further discussions on Bill C-259?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the discussions that are going on are dealing with the announcement I made last week on Thursday, basically, and are preparatory to a meeting of the Ministers of Finance which is to take place as soon as we can possibly arrange it, which will be early in November.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, could the minister indicate at what target date he is aiming for the conference of ministers and will the provisions of Bill C-259, particularly those elements involving co-operation between the federal and provincial governments, be a particular part of the agenda of that conference?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, the meeting is to take place as early in November as possible. Obviously it cannot take place before tomorrow because of certain other events which are taking place. The earliest dates we have had people indicate might be possible are in very early November. Of course Bill C-259, or the tax proposals, will be part of the discussions that take place with the Ministers of Finance of the provinces, as well as the economic outlook and the proposals I announced to the House last Thursday.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN SPEAKER'S GALLERY OF CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

Mr. Speaker: May I be allowed to call the attention of hon. members to the presence in the Speaker's gallery of the distinguished Chairman of the Council of Ministers of

[Mr. Caouette.]

the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Mr. Alexei Kosygin.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: As hon. members know, this is the first official visit to Canada of the head of the government of the Soviet Union. For this reason and for many others, it is an occasion of considerable significance.

All members of this House are confident that the visit will prove to be a fruitful one. We hope that the discussions on matters of mutual interest will contribute to the growing friendly relationship between our two countries. Hon. members are particularly appreciative of the occasion they had this morning to submit representations directly to Mr. Kosygin, and to engage with him in a frank and open discussion of matters which preoccupy us all.

We hope, sir, that you and your colleagues, including the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Soviet Minister of Maritime Shipping, will enjoy your stay in Canada, in Ottawa, as well as in the other cities which you will visit during the days ahead.

[Translation]

We trust that everywhere you will be cordially welcomed by Canadians of good will who seek co-operation between nations and peace throughout the world. Once again, Mr. Prime Minister, we wish you and your colleagues a most cordial welcome in Canada and more particularly in our country's Parliament.

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[English]

FINANCE

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON MEETING OF GROUP OF TEN OFFICIALS—POSSIBLE LIFTING OF UNITED STATES IMPORT SURTAX BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Finance whether he would take the earliest opportunity to make a statement giving some indication to the House of the effect of the meeting held recently in Europe of officials of the ten countries and in particular whether there is any reason to believe that the United States surcharge may be lifted before Christmas?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Well, Mr. Speaker, we are of course represented at the officials' meeting. There has been some contact back and forth with the officials there. When they return to Canada I will take my hon. friend's suggestion under consideration.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

ATLANTIC PROVINCES—ASSESSMENT AND REVAMPING OF DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMS IN LIGHT OF CRITICISMS—LONG-TERM TARGETS

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion arising out of the meeting