

Oral Questions

I would like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether he has had an opportunity to discuss with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance the meeting that was held last week in Europe of the International Monetary Fund. Also, can he indicate what was the result of that meeting in relation to the problems of north-south countries, particularly countries like Jamaica which are staggering under the debt load that the world currency crisis now causes?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I have not yet had a report on that particular meeting from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, but the whole subject of north-south dialogue and all the related concerns which the Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Finance, and other members of the government have been so aware of in recent years, are very much before the government.

There is a special session of the United Nations dealing with this problem this year, and I can assure the hon. member that this is one of our foremost concerns in international affairs.

Mr. Ogle: Madam Speaker, in the recent report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt asked that governments bring the subject of north-south disparities before their parliaments as a matter of the utmost urgency.

Is the minister ready to advance this debate in the House at this time, so that Canada, instead of just joining in the heightening of international tensions could be a forerunner in responding to global development needs, which are not a side issue but a matter of survival today?

Mr. MacGuigan: Madam Speaker, as the House knows, the government has already taken the initiative of establishing a task force in this particular area and, of course, these issues will be before the parliamentary committee and also before the House in due course.

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THE ADMINISTRATION

VISIT OF CABINET MEMBERS TO BRITISH COLUMBIA—REASON THEREFOR

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. It is in respect of the rumour that has been circulated that nine government ministers are embarking upon a mission to that land beyond the Rockies called British Columbia.

Could the Prime Minister tell the House the specific objectives this mission is to accomplish? Also, will he give us an indication of the message this mission is to convey, so that we who come from this strange land can prepare a climate of hospitality with which such important delegations are usually received, and in order that the mission will not end up as a "mission impossible"?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I am surprised that the hon. member calls British Columbia a strange land. It is a very beautiful land and a very integral part of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: I am also surprised that he feels this matter coming up is the subject of rumours. If he had been tied into his constituency he would know that the government of British Columbia has been seeking a meeting with our government for many weeks now. Unfortunately, we have been unable to take enough ministers out west to go to that meeting, but fortunately on the occasion of the visit of the Prime Minister of Japan we have planned parts of the discussions in British Columbia with the Japanese Prime Minister. On that occasion we will have several federal ministers in British Columbia dealing with their counterparts on many subjects of mutual concern.

Mr. Oberle: Madam Speaker, in that context, maybe the Prime Minister could undertake to put members on this side of the House on the mailing list of the political minister who sits in the other House and who, indeed, organized and co-ordinated the mission with those who are to receive it out there.

Could the Prime Minister, specifically, say whether the ministers are prepared to discuss such things as the port of Prince Rupert and agreements with the British Columbia Railway regarding hopper cars, particularly since the Minister of Transport is one of the ministers going out there? More specifically, will they be prepared to discuss some of the commitments made by the former government, and is the mission prepared to reaffirm and underline those commitments again?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I will be happy to accede to the request of the hon. member. I am sure that he is on the mailing list of this government. I think we do everything we can to keep members opposite in touch with their constituents.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: On the subject matters of the discussions, Madam Speaker, there is a very full agenda put together bilaterally by the government of British Columbia and ourselves.

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ENERGY

JURISDICTION OVER OFFSHORE OIL

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources I will ask my question of the Prime Minister.

A few days ago the government of Newfoundland, through its spokesman, the minister of energy, indicated it had received no communication from this government of Canada as to its position regarding the dispute with Newfoundland over the