

early next week, and in the interim I am undertaking a detailed study of the proposals in question to see whether or not anything can be done about this particular industry.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

BOMBING OF NORTH VIET NAM—REQUEST FOR TABLING OF NOTES SENT TO UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, in view of the most unusual nature of the resolution in connection with the bombing of North Viet Nam that the government has in mind to introduce, and in which this parliament will be asked to criticize our great neighbours to the south, would the government table this morning the notes, if any, that have been sent either to the President or the State Department of the United States so that we may have some appreciation of what the government has done in this connection?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the right hon. gentleman has said, we have made representations to the United States at all levels on this question. Of course, it is not customary in exchanges of this kind between governments to publish such communications except with the consent of the other government. This is not what we contemplate doing in any event, but we will be quite happy to inform the House, perhaps during today's debate or otherwise, of the nature of the representations we have made.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, it is no more unusual than the unusual course being suggested, which in my opinion represents the first time that this nation has chosen to criticize another nation in a resolution of parliament.

An hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman has not been here long enough to be dry behind the ears. If the minister, during the course of the discussion later, is prepared to give a summary of the exchanges, why can he not do it now?

Mr. Speaker: Is there a supplementary?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I have asked that question, and there should be no pussyfooting about it either.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1130)

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I think it would be more appropriate to give the answers during the debate on the resolution.

Mr. Diefenbaker: A pussyfooting statement was made.

Oral Questions

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

COST FOR 1972—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT AND EARLY INVESTIGATION BY STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration responsible for unemployment insurance. Has he had an opportunity to delve into the actual cost of this scheme in view of the fact that the figures bandied about have reached some \$2 billion? This matter must be clarified. Can he let the nation know just what the scheme cost Canadian taxpayers and the private sector last year? Can the minister make that statement right now?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the final benefit payments made to claimants in 1972 as of the end of December amounted to \$1,879 million. The portion chargeable to the employer-employee account is estimated at \$1,000,100,000 and the administrative cost to be charged to the employer-employee account is estimated at \$120 million. These figures are very close to those I released about a month ago.

Mr. Baldwin: How about the maladministration costs?

Mr. Alexander: I am pleased that the minister did not say that it is only a drop in the bucket. I should like now to ask the minister when he will be in a position to give the House a definitive statement on why the government was so wrong in its initial statement regarding the cost of the scheme?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am not sure whether the suggestion of the hon. member is that the minister should make a statement now but if he is to make a statement it should be done on motions.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I hope the minister has taken that as notice and I trust he will make a statement in the near future. In view of the importance of this matter, would the minister consult with the government House leader and see that the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration is struck immediately in order that this whole matter may be probed in an effort to find answers to the problems and in order that the Canadian people may be aware of the mess we are in right now?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Trinity on a supplementary question.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

NUMBER RECEIVING BENEFITS IN DECEMBER, 1972, IN RELATION TO NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, it is a related question—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Hellyer: It is also supplementary as I am sure you will agree, Mr. Speaker, after you have heard it. Can the minister give the House an indication of the number of