

Inquiries of the Ministry

the Privy Council section on Sparks Street means that this operation is already in effect?

[Later:]

Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey): The question I wish to direct to the Prime Minister is somewhat related to those asked a few moments ago in connection with the Task Force on Information. Will the Prime Minister ask the Minister of Labour to look at the current series of very costly unemployment insurance advertisements now appearing in the newspapers, the main effect of which so far seems to be to inspire taxpayers to protest their appearance?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has made a representation. He has to assume it will be considered by the minister concerned.

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INFLATION—REPRESENTATIONS BY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE RESPECTING SPENDING PROGRAMS

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): My question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Could the minister tell us what answer was given to the representations of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce yesterday respecting absolute restrictions on the inauguration of open-ended or major spending programs by the government of Canada during the current struggle against inflation?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder whether the hon. member for Edmonton West would not be inclined to agree with me that this is the kind of information that should be given by way of a general statement on motions?

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): A supplementary question. Will the minister make a statement as to the replies that the government made to the representations from such an auspicious body as the Canadian Chamber of Commerce whose representatives came here at great expense to make its views known to the government?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): I would simply like to say, Mr. Speaker, that the question was not asked. It was contained in a brief. It was not raised at the conference at all.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

PUBLIC SERVICE

EFFECT OF CUTBACKS ON WAR AMPUTEES

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): On Thursday last I directed some questions to the Prime Minister and the President of the Treasury Board with reference to the lay-off of war amputees. Has the minister investigated the serious and unjust lay-off of war amputees engaged in the Public Service of Canada? Would he now give us the particulars of his investigation?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): I think steps have been taken to advise the hon. member of the specific circumstances in the two cases he raised. I may say in relation to the general policy, Mr. Speaker, that a scheme for the declaring of redundancy and lay-off procedures was evolved after very lengthy consultations with the employee representatives in the National Joint Council of Canada. Agreement was reached on a philosophy for declarations of redundancy and alternative disposal of such cases. The general principle was that merit should be the sole test in determining the order of redundancy and that as a consequence this would be the predominant factor, but that humanity and considerations of humanity would have to be taken into account. This gives rise to very serious problems of administration for departmental officials.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, to use a word like "redundancy" when dealing with war amputees is terrible.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Not only terrible but typical.

Mr. Woolliams: May I put this supplementary question to the President of the Treasury Board. Have the minister or his legal advisers seriously considered the Public Service Employment Act, section 16, in which by law, prior to the just society, veterans were guaranteed priority over other Canadians?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder whether the question is procedurally acceptable? I have some doubts. The question might be asked in another way if the hon. member wishes to pursue the matter.

Mr. Woolliams: At your suggestion, Mr. Speaker, I will rephrase the question. Has the