

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That is obviously debate and argument. It is not a question.

Mr. Thompson: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, and with due courtesy to yourself, the Prime Minister has invited questions. He said that this is the place where we should ask our questions.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Hillsborough.

OPPORTUNITY FOR JEWS TO EMIGRATE FROM SOVIET UNION TO ISRAEL

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister a supplementary question. Was the government of Israel one of the sources of corroboration of the statement of Mr. Kosygin that the statements about Soviet resistance to Soviet Jews going to Israel were unfounded? Has he actually ascertained that the government of Israel is now satisfied with the way the government of the Soviet Union is treating those of its citizens who wish to go to Israel?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker, I did not say that the government of Israel was satisfied that everyone who wanted to leave the Soviet Union to go to Israel could do so. I said that they are satisfied that the number has increased.

Mr. Macquarrie: Were they one of those listed by the Prime Minister on Friday in his speech as having corroborated the statement of Mr. Kosygin? Were they among that group or not?

Mr. Trudeau: I fail to understand the question.

Mr. Macquarrie: The Prime Minister said the Canadian government had corroborated from various sources that Mr. Kosygin's statement was correct. I ask him now whether the government of Israel was one of those sources?

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I stated that Mr. Kosygin said they had in recent months permitted an increasing number of Soviet citizens of Jewish origin to leave the Soviet Union for Israel. And I say that the Canadian government did ascertain this to be a fact from various sources, one of them being the government of Israel.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Annapolis Valley on a supplementary on the same subject and then go to a representative of one of the parties to the left of the chair.

DISCUSSION OF STATUS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA BY PRIME MINISTER WITH SOVIET AUTHORITIES

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question arises out of the Prime Minister's answer to the hon. member for Mackenzie. In view of the Prime Minister's reference to humanity in relation to the status of independent countries and his statement that he was not

[Mr. Thompson.]

going to interfere, I wonder whether in his talks with either Brezhnev or Kosygin he discussed the status of Czechoslovakia and the plight of that country since 1968?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): In view of the importance the Prime Minister now places upon parliamentary committees, would he not agree to appear before the committee on external affairs to answer these questions which are taking up the time of the House right now?

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FINANCE

INCLUSION OF MEASURES TO ASSIST AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY IN BUDGET

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, if I might be allowed to turn the attention of the government to its domestic problems rather than its external ones, I should like to ask the Minister of Finance this question. Having regard to the very flexible decision he has taken to allow input into the budget up to 48 hours before the time the budget, and probably the minister, leave the launching pad, can the minister assure the agricultural industry that its very special plight and deteriorating situation, as evidenced by the recent DBS figures, will be the subject of remedial treatment in the forthcoming budget?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): I think my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, and the government generally have been doing a good deal and are proposing to do a good deal more to help the agricultural industry, if they can get co-operation from the other side of the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baldwin: As requested by the Minister of Finance I will ask the Minister of Agriculture whether he will give some indication shortly that the government intends to modify its present legislation directed to forcing small family farmers off the land?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Nothing could be further from the truth than that assertion.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SUGGESTED INCLUSION OF MORATORIUM ON REPAYMENT OF FARM LOANS IN BUDGET

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): I should like to ask the Minister of Agriculture whether he has made any representations to the Minister of Finance calling for a temporary moratorium on the repayment of farm improvement loans and Farm Credit Corporation loans in the forthcoming budget in view of the fact that farm cash receipts are continuing to decline and farmers are experiencing serious difficulty in discharging their obligations?