

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. J. J. McCann (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the items to which the hon. gentleman has referred are usually, and this year will be, before the committee on external affairs as they have to do with the international service. I am informed by the minister of external affairs that these items will be considered in that committee. There would be nothing to be gained by having them considered by two committees. The items will eventually come back to the house for consideration. The answer at this time is that they will not be referred to the committee on radio broadcasting.

[Later:]

Mr. Fleming: May I ask the Minister of National Revenue if he is aware that items Nos. 56 and 57 in the estimates have not been referred to the standing committee on external affairs, as he will see by the motion passed in this house on April 21.

ATOMIC ENERGYSUGGESTED STUDY BY COMMITTEE OF
RADIOACTIVE FALL-OUT

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister. If "Operation Cue" does come off on the Nevada desert, will the government give consideration to having any information about radioactive fall-out which may be obtained by Canada's representatives at this test made available to a committee of this house for study?

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): Consideration will be given to the possibility of doing that, but one would have to take into account whatever arrangements about publicity may have been made with the United States authorities when it was arranged for Canadian military and scientific personnel to be present. It will be our desire to make public anything that we can make public.

THE BUDGETANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE
MINISTER OF FINANCE

The house resumed, from Tuesday, May 3, consideration of the motion of Hon. W. E. Harris (Minister of Finance) that Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair for the house to go into committee of ways and means, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Macdonnell.

Hon. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this debate has covered a wide field and has been extended for some days, but there is one particular subject

[Mr. Fleming.]

that I feel I should discuss at this stage of the debate because it has a direct bearing on the whole responsibility of this parliament and the opportunities that Canadians under our federal system are going to have in the years ahead to deal with the problems that they may have to face.

I do not think I would be going too far when I say that history was made in this house last Friday. I might say to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Harris) that I am not suggesting that history was rewritten, but to some extent history was made in this house. I am sure that the statement of the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) in regard to the position of the proposals made in 1945, which have been so long under discussion, must have been easily the most confusing statement ever made by any prime minister of Canada since confederation.

Because it is not possible for those outside the house who read *Hansard* to refer back to other pages, let me recall some of the things that were said in the exchange last Friday. After having asked certain questions in regard to what had taken place in the conference which had just adjourned, I put these words to the Prime Minister as reported on page 3287 of *Hansard*:

In view of the fact that the government has withdrawn its position from that which it stated it was prepared to take in 1945 in regard to the unemployed, I would like to ask the Prime Minister if there are any other specific proposals in the 1945 proposals not yet dealt with from which the government has withdrawn its support. I ask this question because I think it would be helpful in avoiding any unnecessary discussion if there are any other similar cases where the government has withdrawn from the position it took at that time.

Then the Prime Minister is reported as replying as follows:

I cannot accept the word "withdrawn". There were proposals made as over-all proposals in 1945. They were not accepted. I stated at the opening meeting of this preliminary conference that we did not consider that the proposals that had been made and were not accepted at that time were a proper basis for an agenda of discussions at this time.

There have been a great many things done, not because they were in the proposals but because they were considered to be the right things to do—things done since 1945. But the government does not consider that it is bound in any way by unaccepted proposals that were made in 1945.

Let there be no suggestion that anyone in this house was prepared for such a statement. I hope that no hon. member opposite will suggest that he or she was prepared for such a statement. The party of which the Prime Minister is the leader had committed itself to the very opposite position on more than