

Inquiries of the Ministry

note from the United Kingdom co-chairman to the Soviet co-chairman has been received but a dispatch, as hon. gentlemen know, in the Soviet newspaper *Pravda* suggests that the Soviet government will agree to the main elements in the proposals put to them by the United Kingdom government.

An outline of these proposals was given by me in the house on Friday last. The first task following a cease-fire will be the immediate reconvening in New Delhi of the international commission for supervision and control for Laos. The first task of the reconvened commission would be the verification of the cease-fire. When the commission is able to report to the co-chairmen that hostilities have in fact ceased, the next stage will be the summoning of an international conference. It seems probable that the membership of that conference will be wider than that of the Geneva conference of 1954 so that it is likely that Canada will be represented thereon.

The government early made preparations to discharge the obligations that would fall on it should the commission be reconvened. Personnel for full-scale activity by the commission have been ready for some time on a stand-by basis. The exact personnel requirements for the initial meetings of the commission will be determined in consultation with the Indian chairman of the commission whenever a formal request has been received from the United Kingdom and Soviet co-chairmen of the Geneva conference to reactivate the commission.

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): I should like to ask a supplementary question. Can the Prime Minister say whether the Canadian government made any representations to the United Kingdom or the United States before they made these very important representations and, if so, what was Canada's attitude?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member will realize that that question would require a considerably detailed answer and I will simply take it as notice.

FREIGHT RATES**GRAIN—REQUEST FOR DISALLOWANCE OF INCREASED RATES TO EASTERN PORTS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I have another question for the Prime Minister which I do not think will require as much detail to answer. Can the Prime Minister tell the house now, as a result of the statement made in the house by the Minister of Transport with regard to an impending cabinet decision under section 53 of the Railway Act, whether or not the government is prepared to disallow the 25

per cent increase in grain freight rates recently allowed by the board of transport commissioners which is to go into effect on April 1?

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in effect this question is sub judice. An appeal is being made to us and I think the hon. member will agree that during the period when the matter is under consideration questions are not proper or within our rules.

Mr. Argue: My question is this. Will the government come to a decision, as has been indicated by the Minister of Transport, before April 1, and when will an announcement of this decision be made?

Mr. Diefenbaker: As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the necessary papers are not before the government.

Mr. Argue: The increase will be in effect in 48 hours.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**BANK OF CANADA—CONSIDERATION OF REPORT BY COMMITTEE**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. M. Benidickson (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of Finance. I propose to remind him of a commitment that I feel he made to me and, through me, to the house on March 15 when he said that during the following week he would make a statement to the house with respect to the suggestion that the important report of the governor of the Bank of Canada, a report of great democratic interest, should be referred to the banking and commerce committee of the House of Commons.

Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has not quoted me very accurately. He asked his question on March 15 and it is to be found in the second column on page 3013 of *Hansard*. My answer was:

Mr. Speaker, I expect to make a statement in the house on this subject next week, after hon. members have had an opportunity to peruse the report.

Last Tuesday, March 21, when I was prepared to make a statement, the Leader of the Opposition did not wait for my statement. He triggered the matter by directing a question to the Prime Minister on the very same point, taking the question right away from the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River who had first asked it. The Prime Minister answered the question. There was no need then for me to rise and merely repeat the answer