

Inquiries of the Ministry

commonwealth governments will be held in London later this month at which discussions will be held in relation to those commonwealth economic and other interests which the government of the United Kingdom has indicated it intends to seek to preserve in the course of its discussions with the community.

Hon. Paul Martin (Essex East): May I ask a supplementary question. In view of the fact that the minister is going to attend four or five conferences in a row, can he tell us whether he expects to be back in this house before Christmas? And with regard to the conference at Vienna, may I ask the minister who will be in charge of the delegation? Will it be the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Trade and Commerce?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether the first question was prompted by the wish. However, if I come back before Christmas I hope the hon. gentleman will recognize me in the role of Santa Claus as usual. As to his second question, which was asked with his usual measure of innocence, I may say that there is no such question, and none such could arise. My colleague and I go to that conference, as we go to other conferences, in order to operate as a team.

Mr. W. M. Benidickson (Kenora-Rainy River): May I ask the Minister of Finance a supplementary question. He has indicated that he will be attending the conference of the international monetary fund at Vienna. Can the minister inform the house whether it is the intention of the Canadian delegation to sponsor or advance any specific ideas or representations with respect to the price of gold?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Speaker, I take it that the hon. gentleman is referring to a price for gold that might be set somehow under international auspices. He is aware, of course, that it is the price that the United States is prepared to set for gold that largely determines the world price today. There may be variations in various markets, but fundamentally the great determinant of the price of gold in the world is the price established by the United States, and the present price is established by the United States congress, not by executive action. Consequently no change of a material nature is likely to take place in the world price of gold unless it were marked by action in that behalf by the congress of the United States.

I am not aware of any action intended or proposed in the United States congress in that regard. There have been and may well be at this forthcoming annual meeting of governors, discussion related to the world

[Mr. Fleming (Eglinton).]

price of gold. In previous annual meetings there have been references to this subject from time to time, but in the last four years there has been no very direct discussion on the floor of the meeting in that regard. I may say to the hon. member that there have been discussions of a private nature in this regard, but fundamentally this is something which, for any material change, must await action on the part of the congress of the United States.

THE MINISTRY**INQUIRY AS TO ACTING MINISTER OF FINANCE**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): If I may, I should like to ask the Prime Minister a question. Having regard to the fact that there is on the order paper important fiscal legislation, and I am thinking particularly of Bill No. C-122, can the Prime Minister tell the house who will be acting minister of finance while the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Trade and Commerce are away?

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): The Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Nowlan).

SUPPLY

The house in committee of supply, Mr. Chown in the chair.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Department—

76. Departmental administration, \$6,924,915.

Hon. Howard C. Green (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Chairman, today we meet in the Canadian House of Commons at a time of deep crisis. As hon. members know, for some weeks tension has been increasing steadily over Berlin, and within the last week the premier of the Soviet union has announced a resumption of nuclear tests. In addition to that, he has stated that his country can develop a nuclear bomb with the power of 100 million tons of t.n.t., and that such a bomb could then be hurled by rocket to any target in the world.

It was very interesting to read the first reports of this shocking statement. No doubt hon. members have seen them. I refer in particular to one which is contained in the *Ottawa Journal* of September 2. It is a dispatch from Moscow reporting an interview Premier Khrushchev held with two members of the British Labour party. To them he is reported as having declared that he had decided to resume the testing of nuclear weapons in order to shock the western