

*Inquiries of the Ministry***EXTERNAL AFFAIRS****EAST PAKISTAN REFUGEES—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON CANADIAN PLANS TO PROVIDE RELIEF AND INITIATIVES TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT**

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): My question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. As suggested earlier today, will the minister undertake to make a statement on motions with regard to Canada's detailed plans to contribute to humanitarian aid in East Pakistan and West Bengal after he has had an opportunity of discussing the matter with the Indian foreign minister? Also, will the minister include in the statement the political initiatives that the world community, of which Canada is a part, is taking or can take to put an end to this tragic situation?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): I will undertake to make a statement as soon as possible, Mr. Speaker. I doubt very much if it would be useful to make a statement within the next day or two because there are a number of developments taking place that will have an effect on our policy. I will undertake to make a statement just as soon as we have the necessary information and have made decisions.

[Translation]

EAST PAKISTAN—ACHIEVEMENT OF PEACE TO SAVE POPULATION

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a supplementary.

Does the minister know whether an equitable peace can be achieved in that country before cholera exterminates all of its inhabitants?

[English]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I certainly join with my hon. friend in hoping that there will be peace in that part of the world. I agree with what has been said in the House, that we may face one of the great human tragedies and we should be doing everything possible to avoid it.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**COST OF LIVING INCREASE—INTRODUCTION OF PRICE AND WAGE GUIDELINES OR OTHER CONTROLS**

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): My question is for the Acting Prime Minister. As Dominion Bureau of Statistics figures released today show that the cost of living in Canada has been rising since the first of the year at an annual rate of 5.5 per cent, is the government planning to try to control this sharp and serious increase by instituting price and wage guidelines or by some other method?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have noted that the increase in the cost of living in the month of May was .4 per cent compared with .7 per cent

[Mr. Speaker.]

for the previous month. Also, the increase for December and the first five months of this year was 1.9 per cent.

Mr. Hees: A supplementary question. As the minister did not make any attempt to answer my question and the figures I cited are correct and show that the cost of living has been rising at an annual rate of 5.5 per cent since the first of the year, which is the important period we are dealing with, not last year, I ask the minister to answer my question with a yes or no. Is the government planning to move to control this situation by the implementation of price and wage guidelines or not?

Mr. Benson: No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hees: A supplementary question. Is the government planning to continue the jurisdiction of the Prices and Incomes Commission past the end of the present year when it is due to expire?

Mr. Benson: This is a matter for decision by the government which has not been made at this time.

Mr. Hees: As usual.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Peace River.

Mr. Baldwin: In the absence of the Secretary of State I wanted to direct a question to his parliamentary secretary. I am sure he has a large number of documents, and I will defer my question until he reappears.

USE OF LATEST INFORMATION ON COST OF LIVING AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN BUDGET

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance arising out of the question asked by the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings. Can the minister inform the House whether his budget is geared to receiving such information as was disclosed this morning with regard to the cost of living and also information with regard to the unemployment figures which will appear on Thursday? Is the main objective of the budget to be the restoration of a sound economy in Canada in place of the present dragging economy?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the aim of the budget will be to make sure that the expansion which is taking place in the Canadian economy continues.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**EAST PAKISTAN REFUGEES—DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD SUPPLIES**

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): My question is for the Acting Prime Minister. In the aftermath of his discussions with Mr. Kittani, is the minister now satisfied that the movement of food within the area of the refugees is satisfactory, or is there some problem, as outlined by the director of the Food and Agriculture Organization, which is clogging the movement?