

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I shall take notice of that question.

Mr. E. Nasserden (Rosthern): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Finance. Has he initiated any talks with the elevator and terminal companies with a view to improving their facilities for handling additional quantities of grain over what they have been able to handle in the past?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, the wheat board is engaged in this endeavour every working day.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

SUGGESTED RECONSIDERATION OF ACQUISITION OF F-5 PLANE

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence. As a result of the United States defence department deciding not to buy the F-5 is any reconsideration being given by Canadian defence authorities with respect to the acquisition of similar aircraft for Canadian forces, either in the present quantities suggested or in reduced quantities?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): No, Mr. Speaker. We were quite aware of the feelings of various people in the department of defence in Washington at the time our decision was made. Our decision was based on the needs of the Canadian armed forces and not on the needs of the United States air force.

Mr. Lambert: Then in what way does the minister justify his original statement that his decision was based on the decision taken by the United States forces?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That supplementary question is argumentative.

BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM

SUGGESTED DISBANDING OF ROYAL COMMISSION

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the projected costs of the bilingual and bicultural commission, which I understand were recently calculated by the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Marchand), as possibly totalling as much as

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\$7 million, and in view of the minister's desire to cut down expenditures, would he disband that commission now and save the taxpayers an additional \$3 million?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance): No, Mr. Speaker.

POWER

COLUMBIA RIVER—SALES TAX IN EFFECT WHEN TREATY SIGNED

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a question of the Secretary of State for External Affairs which intrigues a good number of us. Can the minister inform the house whether the 11 per cent federal sales tax on machinery was in effect when the Columbia river agreement between the government of Canada and the government of British Columbia was signed?

Mr. Speaker: Order. This intriguing question should be placed on the order paper.

[Later:]

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should answer a question asked a few moments ago by the hon. member for Kootenay West and addressed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The answer is yes.

AIR CANADA

REQUEST FOR IMPROVEMENT IN OTTAWA-TORONTO SERVICE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Eric A. Winkler (Grey-Bruce): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Transport if he would use his good offices to expand and increase the services of Air Canada between Ottawa and Toronto.

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman was good enough to give me notice of his intention to raise this matter, which I believe is of concern to many hon. members who, I am told, are having considerable difficulty getting to Toronto on Fridays.

Mr. Churchill: And other days as well.

Mr. Pickersgill: I shall bring these representations to the attention of Air Canada in the hope that something can be done to improve the situation. Of course the hon. gentleman knows I do not direct Air Canada; I merely report for it.