

Inquiries of the Ministry

commissions have been established, whose task it is to inquire into the penitentiary system. There is, in my department, a commission that sits permanently, and there is an interdepartmental commission that meets as required. These days, this is indeed required, as was probably the case five years ago, and as it might be five years from now. Therefore, it is a permanent problem, and it is reviewed on a permanent basis in order to improve the situation that prevails in our penitentiaries.

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[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**INTENT OF UNITED STATES AUTHORITIES REGARDING FUTURE USE OF GOOSE BAY AIR FORCE BASE**

Mr. Ambrose Hubert Peddle (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, as some nameless voice keeps refusing unanimous consent to reasonable motions, I should like to direct the following question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of today's announcement regarding an approximate 40 per cent reduction of the military force at the United States Air Force base at Goose Bay and some reduction of the civilian force at the same base, will the minister undertake immediately to determine the intent of the United States authorities with regard to the future of that base?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the announcement from the United States government made clear, the United States and Canadian governments have already been very closely in touch on all aspects of this matter.

Mr. Peddle: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Minister of National Defence. Will he give immediate consideration to the defence committee's recommendation that Goose Bay be reactivated as one of the strategic Canadian bases for maritime command operation, for Arctic patrol and for patrol of Canada's coastal waters?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, we have had that under consideration for some time.

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I have a further supplementary for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. I think the people in that part of Canada have a right to know what their future is—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Would the hon. member ask his supplementary.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, I was merely trying to lay a premise for my question which is very urgent and important. Has the government determined what are the intentions of the United States government with regard to the future of this installation which is so important to the economy of that particular part of the country?

Mr. Sharp: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The reductions are part of a thinning out process on the part of the United States government. To answer the question directly, it is not the

[Mr. Goyer.]

intention of the United States government to declare Goose Bay surplus to United States' requirements. They intend to retain the base.

DISCUSSIONS WITH UNITED STATES ON USE BY CANADA OF GOOSE BAY FACILITIES

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could direct a supplementary to the Minister of National Defence. Has the minister had any discussions with the United States military authorities in respect of the use of their base and facilities at Goose Bay?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of National Defence): I have not personally had discussions but I would be quite prepared to inquire to see what departmental or military discussions have taken place.

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE PERSONNEL REDUCTION, GOOSE BAY—CONTINGENCY EMPLOYMENT PLAN FOR DISPLACED CIVILIANS

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Acting Prime Minister whether the government has a contingency plan such as was alluded to by the hon. member for Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador and when the House might be apprised of the plan the government has in mind to offset the impact of the reduction or thinning out the minister mentioned, which is a reduction of 40 per cent?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker. The number of civilian employees involved is 30. As I understand it, about half will be laid off and the remainder will accept alternative employment with the United States Department of Defence. The Department of Manpower and Immigration and the Department of Regional Economic Expansion are working very closely with the local authorities in an effort to minimize the impact. As a result of the representations we made to the United States government, they have substantially improved the conditions for the release of the employees. Under the circumstances I think we have done everything reasonably possible to mitigate the effects of this reduction.

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COMMUNICATIONS**INQUIRY AS TO LOAN BY GOVERNMENT TO TELESAT TO BE REPAYED BY ISSUANCE OF SHARES TO PUBLIC**

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I had a question for the Minister of Communications who is scheduled to be here today, but in his absence perhaps I might direct it to the Acting Prime Minister. Has the government decided to make a loan of some \$30 million to Telesat during the next two or three years, with the intention that the loan be repaid in a few years by the issuing of shares to the public?

Mr. Speaker: I wonder whether the question is so urgent that it should be asked during the oral question period. The hon. member is referring to something which