

Oral Questions

taxpayers and users. I know that these increases will yield some \$125 million in additional revenues to the Post Office, which will result in Canadian taxpayers paying less and users paying more. In my opinion, this is only fair.

[English]

Mr. Darling: Will the Postmaster General table the opinion of the law officers of the Crown to which he referred in his reply to the hon. member for Brandon-Souris last Friday, in order to avoid continuing confusion?

[Translation]

Mr. Lamontagne: Mr. Speaker, I indicated last Friday that we had obtained a legal opinion from the Department of Justice which is fully in our favour, and I suggest we are under no obligation to make it public at this time, and that we need to protect it, should a contestation arise, in order to defend our point of view better.

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[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

RESEARCH CENTRE AT WINNIPEG, MAN.—INTENTIONS RESPECTING CONSTRUCTION

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. In last Saturday's *Free Press*, the Minister of National Revenue was quoted as saying that the federal government would be scrapping its plans to build a new Defence research centre in Winnipeg. Can the Minister of National Defence confirm whether that statement is true and, if so, can he explain why the government has dropped its plans, which will cost at least 200 jobs locally?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the need for that establishment was not sufficiently well established. There was a proposed use for it some time ago. On review, that use is no longer valid; it meant closing down other establishments in the west. There was also some difficulty in obtaining land to the satisfaction of the city. I spoke personally to the mayor who agreed that this was not an appropriate establishment for the location proposed. The hon. member will know that we announced the permanent establishment of a new Air Command headquarters in Winnipeg. This will be a very major establishment on a permanent basis. With other facilities, it will bring some \$105 million a year into Winnipeg. That is a very significant benefit from the military to the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, with regard to buying land in the city of Winnipeg, that is just an excuse; the federal government has many acres of land throughout Manitoba. The predecessor of the Minister of National Defence stated that there was an absolute need for this research centre. He said it was not a political promise and that the need still exists. This statement was made by him last Friday. In light of the federal

[Mr. Lamontagne.]

government having land there, and the former minister saying there is a need, will the minister explain why there is this confusion?

Mr. Danson: Mr. Speaker, there was a need perceived a couple of years ago when that announcement was made. On the best advice I had, and after examining the situation rather thoroughly for somewhat over a year since I have been in this portfolio, it is not my view, as the current minister, that it is required. It is my view that a new Air Command headquarters is required in Winnipeg.

EXPENSES IN CONNECTION WITH SEARCH FOR SOVIET COSMOS SATELLITE

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I have a two-part question for the Minister of National Defence with regard to the Cosmos satellite. First, has the minister read outer space treaties Nos. 6 and 7, and is he satisfied that we have complied with both treaties? Second, the minister assured the House on January 30 that he was keeping a careful record of expenses. Can he inform the House what the expenses of the search have been so far?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I have not read those treaties recently. The first time I read them, I thought it was quite enough. My advice is that we are complying with them. With regard to the second part of the question, we are keeping track of the expenses. The total recovery cost, from the point of view of the Department of National Defence, is in excess of \$4.7 million at this time. That does not include other departments of the federal government.

Mr. McKinnon: I asked the minister if he had read the treaties, because they clearly differentiate between the cost of the search and the expenses and costs of damages. It seems the government has never been able to learn this clear differentiation. We seem to have convinced the Russians that they are to pay for the damages, which are nil, and they have convinced us we are to pay for the expenses, which will be nearly \$5 million. This kind of a deal we can do without. Does the minister plan to point out to his colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, that the expenses are no part of the damages and it says so in the treaty?

Mr. Danson: Mr. Speaker, that is clearly understood. There are two different parts. Certainly, the actual physical damage is somewhat limited, but the cost of determining the ecological damage, the danger to the environment and people, and recovering the parts is rather substantial. We consider that to be very much part of the damage, and it is related to the recovery of the satellite or parts thereof. That is very significant and we are making claims with regard to it, in addition to whatever the amount may be in relation to damage.