

*Veterans Affairs Committee Report*

**Mr. Peters:** Doesn't the minister know there will be no time for the committee to meet?

**Mr. Dubé:** When hon. members return in September it is my understanding that before the house meets the committee will sit. I presume this will be one of the committee's tasks. It will be given every opportunity in the world to study the Woods Committee report. When the members of the committee have read the report they will understand exactly what I mean when I say it is very complex and comprehensive. Of course, when the committee has studied the report and the while paper it will be up to the government to enact legislation based upon decisions reached by the committee.

The hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe was anxious to tell the house that in his opinion the government of Canada was doing very little for our veterans. He went on, if I understood him correctly, to imply that the government should not be dealing with Latin America. If that is the case, I would like to know the policy of his leader and his party in this matter. The hon. member also complained that the government was spending too much money on foreign aid. Again, I would like to obtain the opinion of his leader and party in this regard. I would also be interested in knowing whether he was speaking on behalf of his party when he complained about our proposed recognition of China. He did not appear to be very happy about the sums of money spent during centennial year; yet the National Centennial Act which established the basis for those celebrations was enacted in 1961 by his party. Is it the position of his party and his leader that the money spent in 1967 for celebrating the 100th anniversary of Canada was not well spent? We would like to hear about that.

The hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) covered very much the same points. He dealt at random with several points without really making one. The only one I can remember dealt with the Hong Kong prisoners. I am very familiar with the plight of the Hong Kong prisoners; several of them come from my native village. This recommendation, like the 147 other recommendations, is part and parcel of the Woods Committee report. I cannot discuss that report at the moment without first knowing the policy of my government in the matter.

I do not wish to take up more of the time of the house. I think I should conclude by saying that the government of Canada is not neglecting our veterans; in fact, in the past

[Mr. Dubé.]

fiscal year we spent over \$400 million in assisting them. The budget of the Department of Veterans Affairs has been increasing every year. We have in the department very able personnel. I believe most veterans across the country would agree with that. It was said by one hon. member that the government of Canada does not recognize the special debt owed by Canadians to our veterans. This is not true; we treat our veterans in a very special way. We do recognize that the citizens of this country owe them a great debt. We are providing our veterans with more advanced veterans legislation than can be found anywhere in the world. Canada is one of the few countries that still has a department of veterans affairs. In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would say that it is an excellent department, doing an excellent job.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRIVILEGE

MR. LEWIS—HOLDING OF PRESS CONFERENCE BY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS BEFORE MAKING STATEMENT TO HOUSE

**Mr. David Lewis (York South):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I learned of the matter I wish to raise only at lunch time, so this is the first opportunity I have had to raise it. I might have done it at two o'clock but I did not want to interrupt the remarks of the Minister of Veterans' Affairs (Mr. Dubé). I am sorry that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) is not here and that no minister other than the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Dubé) is present, but I hope that the minister will convey to the government my strong protest, and I am sure the protest of every hon. member who thinks about the matter.

● (2:20 p.m.)

I learned at noon hour today that the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) has arranged to hold a press conference at four o'clock this afternoon to make a statement and to answer questions regarding his recent trip abroad. Hon. members will recall that this morning the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) asked the Prime Minister whether the Secretary of State for External Affairs would be here on Monday and whether he would make a statement on his trip. If my memory serves me right, the Prime Minister said that the Secretary of State for External Affairs would be