

Inquiries of the Ministry

the facts would justify. These stories came to the conclusion that final decisions on the western negotiating position have been taken, whereas in fact western policies are still very much under discussion. This was emphasized in the United Kingdom House of Commons by the foreign secretary, Mr. Lloyd, when similar questions were raised there last week. He replied, in part, as follows: "We are still in the process of preparation; no decisions have been made."

A committee of experts on which the United States, the United Kingdom, France and West Germany are represented is now meeting in London to prepare proposals for the western side. In its deliberations the committee will consider the suggestions of other member countries of NATO, including the suggestion regarding the role of the United Nations in Berlin which I mentioned in the house on March 19 and which was developed by the Minister of National Defence at the NATO ministerial meeting in Washington. The house was informed of the general content of this suggestion in statements by myself and the Minister of National Defence on April 7 and 8 respectively. When the committee of experts has finished its work in London it will report to the NATO council in Paris and subsequently to the foreign ministers of the four western powers.

As this process continues, the position of the western powers will take more definite shape and it is to be expected that speculation will increase. However, I think it would be more in the general interest and more helpful to the house if I were to withhold comment until we know finally what the western negotiating powers decide they can officially make public prior to the opening of the negotiations.

The western foreign ministers are scheduled to meet with the Soviet foreign minister in Geneva beginning May 11 and, depending on developments, a subsequent meeting of heads of government will take place. The Canadian suggestions regarding a possible role for the United Nations were intended, as hon. members are aware, to be complementary to a four power agreement on Berlin, and they cannot therefore be given practical application until such an agreement has been reached. I have no doubt, however, that in the meantime the four western governments are continuing to keep before them the possibility of a significant role for the United Nations in the solution of the Berlin problem.

I express the hope once more that it will be possible to achieve that degree of agreement which will permit of that role for the United Nations as suggested by Canada being implemented and carried into effect.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

WEST BERLIN—REFERENCE TO HIGH ALTITUDE FLIGHTS BY U.S. AIR FORCE

On the orders of the day:

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister if in view of the fact that Canada as a member of NATO is now sharing responsibility for the defence of West Berlin, Canada was consulted by the United States government before the decision was taken in Washington to use the Berlin air corridor above the ceiling of 10,000 feet?

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): In regard to that question I think I had better look into the record very carefully before giving an answer, rather than depend on memory at the moment. I will, accordingly, let the hon. member and the house know as soon as I have examined the record in detail.

GRAIN

INQUIRY AS TO REPORT ON ALLOCATION OF BOX CARS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Trade and Commerce having to do with the Bracken royal commission which was to inquire into box car allocation and obtain a satisfactory formula for such allocation. As a result of his inquiries can the minister say when this report will be delivered to him by the queen's printer and when it may be tabled in the house?

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, the report will be tabled in the house tomorrow at 2.30.

WHEAT—INQUIRY AS TO FINAL PAYMENT ON 1957-58 CROP

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, in view of the very welcome answer given to me a few moments ago by the Minister of Trade and Commerce I am encouraged to ask whether he can tell the house when the final payment on last year's wheat account may be announced. Has the wheat board yet recommended such a payment?

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, one piece of good news per day should be sufficient for the hon. member for Assiniboia, but I will have an answer for him tomorrow on this question.