

of Agriculture who is speaking for this government, the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has said something I did not say. He said that I said we need no new food policy. I have never said that. I said we have a food policy, and I welcome any improvements to it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

AIRPORTS

PRINCE ALBERT—APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURES FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. I endeavoured to find this out from the President of the Treasury Board on Friday. Has the Minister of Transport made any recommendations to the Treasury Board with regard to the expenditures necessary at the Prince Albert airport, to which reference was made during the recent by-election but which has apparently been forgotten by the minister ever since?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that the right hon. gentleman at last asks the question when I am in the House after twice attempting to ask it when I was not here.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lang: That compliments exactly the deceit of the right hon. gentleman in appearing to imply here in the House that it was not completely clear in Prince Albert that the agreement signed was an operational agreement with regard to the airport. When I announced the plans for Prince Albert, I made it clear, in Prince Albert, that Treasury Board approval was being sought for those items. That approval is being sought. It was clear to the right hon. gentleman; he was in Prince Albert, and it was in the Prince Albert *Herald*. I think, therefore, that he owes an apology to me and the people of Prince Albert.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I raised this question in the absence of the minister. If I were to wait for when he returns from one of his many jet trips in Canada made for political purposes, I would never get the chance to ask him questions.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am delighted to hear he made the recommendation finally. Clearly, it was made as a result of pressure from the opposition.

Oral Questions

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, I have a question supplementary to the one raised by the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi, and I direct it—

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I meant to raise a question on the word “deceit” used by one who understands what it means.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* * *

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

SUGGESTION SEMINAR ON FOOD POLICY BE OPEN TO PUBLIC—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Yesterday the minister sponsored a seminar in Ottawa on food policy, a seminar in which food industry people as well as the government participated. In view of what the Minister of Finance said on Friday about ongoing discussions for a national food policy, notwithstanding what the Minister of Agriculture said today, discussions which would take into account the interests of consumers and the viability of the agricultural industry in Canada—and I congratulate the minister on his initiative—is he prepared to re-open this seminar to the public so that the public which has a vested interest, obviously, in the food policy can provide some input? At the same time, if such a seminar were open to the public, perhaps the Minister of Agriculture could participate as well.

Hon. A. C. Abbott (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the research study which has been recently initiated by the Bureau of Competition Policy has to do with the effect of government regulation on competition in selected agricultural industries. The seminar was sponsored by the bureau to obtain working level input to this study from qualified industry and academic representatives. The seminar is being carried on by the director of investigation and research under the Combines Investigation Act. However, the study is not part of my department's work on food policy.

Mr. McGrath: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his answer. May I ask if we can conclude that the minister has now assumed, rightfully, responsibility for co-ordinating discussions within cabinet on food policy?

Mr. Abbott: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his confidence. The fact is food policy discussions are continuing. As I just said, a separate study is being carried on by a certain branch of the department. I hope it will produce some useful information.