

Inquiries of the Ministry

[Later:]

Mr. Howard: I do not wish to prolong this question period unduly, but since the associate minister of defence is here I should like to pose a question to him which was asked on Wednesday last, as reported at page 252 of *Hansard*.

Replying to that question, the hon. gentleman said there would be a meeting on Friday among himself, the Minister of National Defence and the two committees of the R.C.A.F. reserves and the Royal Canadian Navy reserves, at which time a decision would be taken and it would be possible to make known to the house the over-all decisions reached by the Department of National Defence relating to the proposed closing of certain stations.

A few moments ago I asked the Minister of National Defence a question about this matter, and he preceded his answer by saying "I think" that such and such is the case. I wonder if the associate minister, inasmuch as he answered the original question put to him by the hon. member for Calgary North, is now able to give the house a clear and unequivocal statement about the policy of the department and the decisions reached at this meeting.

Hon. Lucien Cardin (Associate Minister of National Defence): The Minister of National Defence and myself met with the committees which were set up to deal with the question of the R.C.A.F. and R.C.N. reserves. The Minister of National Defence did, I believe, answer the question concerning the Royal Canadian Navy reserves. As far as the air force is concerned I should like to make a more complete statement on Monday.

Mr. Howard: A supplementary question. Am I to understand that of the eight naval stations which were referred to originally by the Minister of National Defence, the only one now to be closed is *Chatham* at Prince Rupert, and that the others are to be kept open?

Mr. Cardin: No, Mr. Speaker. The R.C.N. station *Chatham* has definitely been closed. Decisions regarding the other stations are being kept in abeyance until the final report of the Suttie commission has been received. The buildings will not be sold until the report from the commission is known.

Mr. Howard: I think what the minister should have said in answer to my supplementary question was "Yes, the only one to be closed is the one at *Chatham*, Prince Rupert". May I ask the minister why this one station was singled out of all the rest?

Mr. Cardin: Yes. It was felt no useful purpose would be served by keeping the station open. Only a limited amount of recruiting was possible. Both the R.C.N. and the committee which studied the question of reserves for the R.C.N. felt this was one station which could be closed immediately. Final decisions have not been reached with regard to whether the other stations are to be closed or not. They will be taken only after the results of the Suttie committee have been made known.

GOLDEN HAWKS AEROBATIC TEAM—CANCELLATION OF SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Fred F. Stenson (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence. Before the Golden Hawks were disbanded they had made certain speaking commitments. One was in Peterborough at a father and son scout banquet, but now under directions from the minister's department they have cancelled this engagement. Would the department reconsider these commitments that were already made?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I understand there were several such commitments, and it was decided that rather than select one or two of those and fulfil them, in view of the fact that it would not be possible to keep them all it would be better to cancel them in all cases.

R.C.A.F.—HOUSING FOR TRANSFERRED OVERSEAS PERSONNEL

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Lucien Cardin (Associate Minister of National Defence): Yesterday the hon. member for Brandon-Souris asked if any steps had been taken to meet what he termed the critical housing needs of the R.C.A.F. personnel involved in the current transfer of squadrons from Grostenquin to Zweibrücken.

I am informed that the housing situation at R.C.A.F. station Zweibrücken is not considered critical at the present time, but as additional personnel are posted there a close watch will be kept on the situation.

ARTS, LETTERS AND SCIENCES

REPORTED REMARK OF CO-CHAIRMAN OF ROYAL COMMISSION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. L. J. Pigeon (Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, I have a direct question to address to the Acting Prime Minister. Does the Acting Prime Minister