

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. E. D. Fulton (Minister of Justice): On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, may I say this. You will recall that the first question asked by the hon. member for Essex East sought information as to whether a report contained in the press that the Prime Minister had received a document was true. His second question asked merely whether the Prime Minister had received a document in December, 1957. I would refer Your Honour to citation 171 in Beauchesne's fourth edition. Subparagraph (e) points out that a question must not—

(e) inquire whether statements made in a newspaper are true.

Hence the first question asked by the hon. gentleman was out of order. Subparagraph (l) states that a question must not—

(l) seek, for purposes of argument, information on matters of past history.

The confidential document alleged to have been received would obviously have been received, if received, in December, 1957.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Fulton: I do not know what the hon. gentleman's definition of past history is, but to our mind on this side of the house December of 1957 is past history. Perhaps my hon. friend's party does not move that quickly. Both questions were clearly out of order and are not of the type of question which is in order raising matters of immediacy or matters of today. It is surely not in order under the rules to ask a question on orders of the day whether somebody received a document nearly a year and one-half ago.

Mr. Speaker: As considerable point has been made about this particular question I think it would be preferable if I see the question in *Hansard* and deal with it tomorrow rather than attempt to do so now. No harm will be done if the matter is deferred.

Mr. Hellyer: I should like to ask the Prime Minister if the government did in fact receive representations on behalf of the aircraft industry during the month of December, 1957.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: As I understood the hon. member's question, it seemed to be a fairly broad one which had already been asked.

Mr. Hellyer: I should narrow it to December 2, Mr. Speaker, with your permission.

Mr. Fulton: Of 1957.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member will recall that on Monday we spent a day discussing this matter. To inquire into matters of as little urgency as the one which the hon.

[Mr. Chevrier.]

member now raises seems to me to be repeating a discussion which has already taken place.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, may I address myself to the observations which Your Honour has just made. We have accepted the suggestion Your Honour made with regard to the questions I had put to the Prime Minister. But the hon. member for Trinity has put a question to which no serious objection can be taken, I would submit, under our rules. At the present time important conferences are taking place between the Prime Minister and other representatives of the government and representatives of the aircraft industry. This is a matter of great interest in view of the thousands of men who have been put out of work.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Surely, Mr. Speaker, on account of the attending circumstances under our rules the question put by the hon. member for Trinity must either be answered by the Prime Minister or he must take the position that he does not propose to answer it. I would submit to Your Honour that that is the position now facing the house.

Mr. Speaker: It seems to me that the question is substantially the one which was asked earlier by the hon. member. It relates to the same matter. I would ask that this matter be left over so I can give a more considered view of the question of regularity as to which so much has been said.

COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS

SUGGESTED CHANGE OF NAME FROM EMPIRE DAY TO COMMONWEALTH DAY

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address to the Prime Minister a question which I am confident is in order and will satisfy the sensitive ears of the Minister of Justice. In view of the statement made by the Prime Minister of Great Britain in the House of Commons at Westminster on December 18 last to the effect that, with the concurrence of the other commonwealth governments, it is proposed to forthwith change the name of Empire day to Commonwealth day, does the government propose to introduce legislation this session that would change the name Victoria day to Commonwealth day?

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as to the question which was asked of me may I say this. It