

territorial coroner for a federal inquiry into the Panarctic air crash off Melville Island last October?

Mr. Cliff McIsaac (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in answer to the hon. member's question let me say I do not think there will be an inquiry from the point of view of the Ministry of Transport. The report of the Department of Transport, I understand, is nearly completed and is related to the cause of the accident. It will be released later on this summer when it is completed. It will not be for the Ministry of Transport to be involved with the coroner from the north who is inquiring into the cause of death. That really involves another department.

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● (1440)

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

ALLEGED DRUG SMUGGLING AT MONTREAL AIRPORT— REQUEST FOR REPORT—POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT OF EMPLOYEES OF TRANSPORT AND NATIONAL REVENUE

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, I should like to say to the Prime Minister in respect of his pigskin hypothesis that if you take away the ball you do not have the end run and you change the whole complexion of the ballgame. However, I rose to ask a question of, and welcome back, the Solicitor General in a state of apparent health. I hope the proceedings tonight do not cause his relapse. While appreciating the fact that the minister has been incapacitated, I wonder whether he has had an opportunity to talk to the commissioner of the RCMP and the investigating officers about the story in respect of Montreal airport and allegations by Sergeant Leduc and another officer that at least 60 individuals were involved in the smuggling of drugs into this country.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the hon. member for his kind words. I did follow up this matter while I was away. No complete report is yet ready but I hope to have further information this week and will be glad to give it to the House.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that information as far as it goes, but separate and apart from anything the minister can tell us about the actual investigation has he discussed the matter further with the Minister of National Revenue to try to clarify the part of the allegation that not only were other individuals allegedly involved but that perhaps officials of the Department of Transport and/or the Department of National Revenue were involved.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I have been away for two weeks and have not had an opportunity to discuss this with the Minister of National Revenue in those two weeks, but I had discussed it originally. I have no further recent information.

Oral Questions

PENITENTIARIES

MEASURES TO INCREASE SECURITY OF INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Solicitor General. Sometime ago in his absence the Prime Minister took as notice a question I asked him. I had inquired about what immediate steps the government intends to take to increase security around federal prisons in Canada so that people living in the vicinity of the prisons need not be concerned about attempted or successful break-outs and the possible threat to their safety.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Well, Mr. Speaker, in the last year or so we have made considerable efforts to upgrade security in our medium and maximum security penitentiaries with the result that escapes are down 66 per cent from 1972. Although that is quite an improvement we are still not satisfied and will not be satisfied so long as there are any escapes. There has been a lot of effort and many measures were taken. It would take me some time to give the hon. member all the measures that were taken.

Mr. Beatty: I have one brief supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In light of the fact that since those actions were taken we have had the incident in British Columbia, may I once again ask the minister what steps the government intends to take now and in the future to prevent incidents such as this and future incidents where people may successfully get out and may threaten the well-being of people living in the neighbourhood of prisons.

Mr. Speaker: Even in light of that specific incident, I still feel the hon. member's question is really much too general, as was the first one.

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NORTHERN AFFAIRS

CRASH OF PANARCTIC AIRCRAFT—REQUEST FOR PUBLIC INQUIRY

Mr. Wally Firth (Northwest Territories): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Transport, may I direct a question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development responsible for Panarctic. In view of the concern of the relatives and friends of the 32 people who lost their lives in the Panarctic plane crash at Rae Point in the Northwest Territories last year and in view of the concern by the general public regarding that plane crash will the minister advise the House whether there will be a public inquiry and if so who will head it and when might one expect a report from such an inquiry?

Hon. Judd Buchanan (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the inquiry has been held by the Department of Transport. As I understand it there has been a deferral of the inquest. It is my understanding that it will go forward later in the year. The hon. gentleman suggests there is some road-blocking by Panarctic. I think I should mention that there seems to be some confusion in the press concerning the action being taken by the lawyers representing certain employees and