

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Does the request by the United States government involve the stationing of U.S. military personnel on Canadian soil, and will the program include not only a military alert but also tactical or strategic exercises?

Mr. Cadieux (Labelle): Mr. Speaker, whether exercises in a time of crisis would be called strategic exercises is not for me to determine. The request is that these bases would be used in time of international crises.

Mr. Stanfield: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, it is now clear that my questions of yesterday and today are of urgent public importance. Therefore I should like to ask the minister when the request was made by the United States and what answer the government of Canada proposes to make?

Mr. Cadieux (Labelle): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I have an indication that discussions took place through the permanent joint board and at different levels to reinstate the former agreement. They began about May, 1967. They have been going on ever since. I cannot indicate what the decision of the government will be because it has not been taken.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact the agreement, as I recall it, was made during the period of my administration, is it a fact that what is being sought by the United States now merely involves changes and new conditions referred to by the minister? Is there any reason in the interests of Canada and the protection of this country for not acceding to the request so long as our sovereignty is maintained?

Mr. Cadieux (Labelle): If I were permitted to express a personal opinion I would agree with the right hon. gentleman.

Mr. Speaker: I understand the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands has a supplementary question, following which I will recognize the hon. member for Edmonton West.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): The minister answered only the latter part of my question. I also asked him whether or not the request of the Pentagon involved the stationing of United States military personnel on Canadian soil?

Mr. Diefenbaker: What would be wrong with that?

[Mr. Cadieux (Labelle).]

Mr. Cadieux (Labelle): Mr. Speaker, I think one of the provisions, if I remember correctly, involves United States personnel for training, if some arrangement has been made with the Canadian authorities. My understanding is that these personnel would be flown in with the operation itself in the event of an international crisis.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, in light of Canada's difficulty in obtaining tanker refuelling planes for our CF-5's, would one of the considerations be having available on Canadian soil K-135 tankers with the refuelling capacity necessary for our aircraft in order to make them operationally possible?

Mr. Cadieux (Labelle): The tanker to which my hon. friend has referred is actually one that we are considering.

CANADA PENSION PLAN**EXEMPTION OF OLD ORDER MENNONITES**

Mr. Max Saltsman (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

An hon. Member: He has been out looking for a cigarette.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Saltsman: It is in connection with a reply he gave me during the adjournment debate regarding the exemption of Mennonites from the Canada Pension Plan. At that time the minister indicated he would discuss this matter with the cabinet. Has he discussed it with them and, if so, what conclusions have been reached?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, this matter is under consideration by the government at the present time. No decision has yet been reached.

Mr. Stanfield: Like everything else.

Mr. Saltsman: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister give us some indication when a decision will be reached? Will it be before parliament adjourns?

Mr. Munro: Possibly some time in the next few weeks, Mr. Speaker.