

Inquiries of the Ministry

Honour or members of this House. Therefore I think the answers of the Acting Prime Minister must be considered most inappropriate and unparliamentary, and that hon. members have the right to hear now from the President of the Treasury Board rather than being asked to wait for 24 hours during which time the minister is free to make whatever statement he wants, whenever he wants, to the public at large.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

REQUEST FOR TABLING OF MEMORANDUM, "SPECIAL RECRUITMENT OF FRANCOPHONES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE"

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Acting Prime Minister whether he will table a copy of the memorandum entitled "Special recruitment of Francophones in the Public Service" in order that we may have it before us officially?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will undertake to do that.

PROGRAM FOR HIRING OF FRANCOPHONE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES—SOURCE OF FUNDS

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, as approximately \$2 million is involved in this program, will the Acting Prime Minister advise the House from what vote that money is being taken?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this amount of money relates to next year and has not yet been allocated to any specific program. It is not a fund; rather it is an estimate of the staffing costs of departmental proposals to increase Francophone recruitment.

[Later:]

PROGRAM FOR HIRING OF FRANCOPHONE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES—CONCEALMENT OF EXPENDITURES

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I return to the questions initially asked by the Leader of the Opposition. I would like to ask the Acting Prime Minister whether he has discussed this matter with the President of the Treasury Board and what explanation there is for the fact that the President of the Treasury Board denied flatly the existence of the program when confronted with the confidential memo? Is it now possible for \$2 million to be expended without the President of the Treasury Board knowing anything about it? At the same time, when the minister is giving his answer, will he let the House know whether there are some orders and directions for expenditure that have been made since the first day of March, 1970, which have not yet been made public or indeed have been kept secret?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): The right hon. gentleman, having been the head of a government and having been in this Parliament longer than anyone else, certainly knows that the government would not be

promising to spend any money that had not been approved by parliament.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Sharp: The so-called secret plan referred to in the press is actually a study being carried out by officials with a view to further progress toward the goal of greater Francophone recruitment by determining how additional Francophones might be brought into the service and meaningfully employed within departmental programs. Knowing the right hon. gentleman's interest in the subject, I am quite sure he would approve.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The hon. gentleman's evasiveness has become so characteristic as not to arouse any surprise. Now I ask him whether or not he will answer the question I asked, whether, during the period since March 1, there has been concealment of expenditures by the government of Canada? I particularly direct his attention to the fact that a memo providing for the expenditure of \$190,000 for the answering of letters in respect of the white paper on taxation was concealed from parliament and it has not yet been made public.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Sharp: Quite clearly no money can be expended out of next year's estimates until they have been approved by parliament, and I hardly need to give any undertaking that if any of these plans do go through they will be brought before parliament for approval.

PROGRAM FOR HIRING OF FRANCOPHONE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES—OFFER TO TABLE MEMORANDUM—RECONCILIATION WITH STATEMENT

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Acting Prime Minister whether the House of Commons will be given a reconciliation between the statement made by the President of the Treasury Board in which he denied the existence of the program and the fact that today the Acting Prime Minister offers to table a copy of the memorandum?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker, and I understand that the chairman of the Public Service Commission may also be making a statement today because it is most desirable that this situation be clarified. It seems to have been based on some misunderstanding.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Some falsification by the government.

Mr. Sharp: Certainly there was never any intention on the part of anyone concerned to conceal anything from parliament or from anyone else.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): In view of the statement of the Acting Prime Minister that the government would like to see this matter cleared up, would the government like to reconsider its position with regard to the motion I made today under Standing Order 43 and let the matter be referred to a committee of the House?

[Mr. MacDonald (Egmont).]