

chase of the P3-C affect either the cost of the plane to Canada or the amount of work which will fall to Canadian industry?

[Translation]

Mr. Goyer: Mr. Speaker, the contract we intend to sign with Lockheed Aircraft Corporation of Canada has been subject to a long study by an interdepartmental committee, under the direction of the Department of National Defence, and for which the government paid a considerable amount of money to have the program finalized. This contract has finally been negotiated through the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce to establish what would be the best economic repercussions for Canada.

We thought we had all the possible advantages to meet our needs and our economic objectives. This is why we are considering the possibility of signing the contract with Lockheed Aircraft once the arrangements concerning the long term financing are completed.

[English]

CONTRACT WITH LOCKHEED FOR LONG RANGE PATROL
AIRCRAFT—ASSURANCE NO COMMISSIONS PAID

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what questions the Minister of Supply and Services is answering, but they are certainly not the questions I am asking.

My supplementary is for the Minister of National Defence. In view of the statement of the Solicitor General to the House on February 10 that the RCMP is not investigating the question of possible Lockheed kickbacks in Canada for the sale of the LRPA, does the minister have anything other than an assurance from the chairman of the board of Lockheed, who is hardly a disinterested party, that commissions have not and will not be paid on the Canadian LRPA contract?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, there is no evidence of any wrongdoing or bribery related to the LRPA program, and if the hon. member has a specific accusation, I wish he would make it. Otherwise, I do not think we should engage in a witch hunt.

Mr. McGrath: Why don't you make a statement and reassure the Canadian people that there is no bribery?

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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

POSSIBILITY GOVERNMENT MEMBERS NOT PERMITTED A
FREE VOTE ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Solicitor General a question. Last evening the Prime Minister stated that he was going to try to persuade parliament to abolish capital punishment, and if he was not successful, he would resign. I should like to ask the Solicitor General whether he had a discussion with the Prime Minister in this regard and whether the Prime Minister was, in fact, indicating a free vote on

Oral Questions

capital punishment would not take place on the Liberal government side of the House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I did not hear all of the question. There was too much noise in the House.

An hon. Member: Louder, Eldon.

Mr. Woolliams: That is the greatest compliment I have had for a long time. My hon. friends opposite say I am getting weak, but I will put the question again.

Last evening the Prime Minister stated that he would try to persuade parliament to abolish capital punishment, and that if he was not successful, he would resign. I should like to know whether the Solicitor General had a discussion along these lines with the Prime Minister and whether the Prime Minister was in fact indicating that a free vote on capital punishment would not take place on the government side, but rather a vote on the retention of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Allmand: I cannot accept that the Prime Minister said exactly what was reported by the hon. member. I have not had a chance to talk to the Prime Minister or to read his exact words, and I will have to see him when he comes back.

Mr. Woolliams: I should like to quote briefly what the Prime Minister said so that the Solicitor General will have this information.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Woolliams: "If it's against my conscience to hang..."

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Solicitor General has given his answer about having to talk to the Prime Minister before making an answer.

Mr. Woolliams: I can assure the Solicitor General that the Prime Minister did say that.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Woolliams: I can wait. I should like to put this question to the Solicitor General: did he have a discussion with the Prime Minister, and is there an arrangement that certain members of the cabinet would resign if the bill did not pass? Is that the arrangement, and is that the kind of free vote the Solicitor General recommends to the House?

Mr. Allmand: The hon. member knows the policy of the government with respect to the bill in the House, but I believe the government has said there will be a free vote on this issue. There will be a government bill. Again, I must say that I cannot accept a report from a newspaper article as being the exact words of the Prime Minister.

● (1430)

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary. We can get away from the opinion of the Solicitor General, but I should like to ask him pointblank if he can assure the House on behalf of the government, and particularly members of cabinet, that there will be a free vote in this House on capital punishment when the bill is presented?