

Public Works. Would the minister make inquiries to find out whether the well printed signs along the sides of the trans-Canada highway from one end of Newfoundland to the other reading "Thank you, Mr. Pearson, for this highway" were paid for by the rest of the taxpayers of Canada?

Mr. Speaker: Order.

INDIAN AFFAIRS

COURT DECISION RESPECTING PROVISION OF MEDICAL CARE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, last Friday I asked a question of the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources which he promised to take as notice. I asked at that time whether any decision had been made with respect to supplying health services to the Indian native population of this country.

Hon. Arthur Laing (Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member if he would give us another day.

AIR CANADA

WINNIPEG—REPORT OF INQUIRY RESPECTING MAINTENANCE BASE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Transport whether he has yet received the report of the Thompson inquiry with regard to the air base at Winnipeg and, if so, when the report will be tabled.

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the report is being translated and printed, and it will not be presented formally to His Excellency until that procedure has been completed. I hope it will be quite soon.

CRIMINAL CODE

PROPOSED AMENDMENT REGARDING CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

The house resumed, from Monday, March 28, consideration of the motion of Messrs. Byrne, Nugent, Scott (Danforth) and Stanbury:

Resolved, that it is expedient to introduce a measure to amend the Criminal Code for the purposes of

(a) abolishing the death penalty in respect of all offences under that act;

Criminal Code

(b) substituting a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment in those cases where the death penalty is now mandatory; and

(c) providing that no person upon whom a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment is imposed shall be released from imprisonment without the prior approval of the Governor in Council.

And on the proposed amendment thereto of Mr. Gauthier.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I had hoped that the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) or some minister representing the government would have placed before the house and the country the views of the government regarding the abolition of capital punishment.

Mr. Pearson: It is not a government matter.

Mr. Diefenbaker: It is a responsibility of the government constitutionally even though the vote is to be a free vote.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am surprised that the Prime Minister takes such an attitude. Apparently he has not looked up the constitutional position which places upon the government of Canada now in office the responsibility of stating to parliament the views of the government.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the right hon. gentleman a question on that point at the beginning of his remarks? Did he put the views of his government on record when the McGee capital punishment bill was being discussed?

Mr. Diefenbaker: I have the floor, Mr. Speaker. Apparently the Prime Minister has not looked up the constitutional proprieties again.

Mr. Pearson: When did you speak on it?

Mr. Diefenbaker: His interruption seems to indicate that he can get along all right while he is making up his mind but where he gets into trouble is when he finally makes it up.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The Prime Minister says that it is not the responsibility of the government, so I begin at once by pointing out to him the fact that constitutionally it is required of the government to make clear its position even though the vote is a free vote. I can understand the difficulty of the Prime Minister because already we have had two