

Inquiries of the Ministry

defence policy, including nuclear weapons and weapon systems, will be before parliament for consideration at a very early date.

CHURCHILL, MAN.—INQUIRY AS TO MAINTENANCE
OF U.S. AIR BASE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Robert Simpson (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence. In view of the announcement yesterday that the United States air force were discontinuing their strategic air command base at Frobisher Bay, I wonder if the minister could tell the house whether a similar plan is contemplated in relation to Churchill, Manitoba.

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I think I had better take this question as notice and reply at the beginning of next week.

THE MINISTRY

REQUEST FOR DESIGNATION OF SENIOR AND
JUNIOR MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. D. Clancy (Yorkton): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister a question. Will he designate who are the senior and junior ministers of agriculture, just to clear up confusion when we ask questions in the future; and can he say by whom questions are going to be answered?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman ought to know that there is only one Minister of Agriculture at the present time.

An hon. Member: It had better remain that way.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

INQUIRY AS TO ADMINISTRATION OF HOSPITALS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a question to the Minister of Veterans Affairs to allay the fears of many veterans and provide him with a first opportunity to wet his ministerial feet. Is it the intention of the present government to continue the policy of the former government with respect to continuing the administration of veterans hospitals within the Department of Veterans Affairs?

Hon. Roger Teillet (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, for the present moment, yes.

[Mr. Pearson.]

[Later:]

Mr. George L. Chatterton (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. In an earlier reply I understood the minister to say that he is not contemplating a change at present in the operation of the veterans hospitals by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Can the minister say whether the government is contemplating a change in this relationship some time in the future?

Mr. Teillet: Mr. Speaker, this matter is under investigation and consideration. I just had a very brief opportunity to look into the question. A departmental group is at work. However, I do not wish to give here the kind of reply which will disturb the veterans in the hospitals and the staff. I wish to give assurance that, as always in this department, the interests of the veterans and of the staff in the hospitals will be safeguarded.

PENSIONS COMMISSION—INQUIRY AS
TO FILLING OF VACANCIES

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Veterans Affairs. I should like to ask him whether he has filled the two vacancies on the pensions commission which were existing when the government took office on April 22.

Hon. Roger Teillet (Minister of Veterans Affairs): To my knowledge there were no vacancies on the commission at that time.

Mr. Churchill: That is hardly an answer which can be accepted by the house. It is within the knowledge of the public generally that there were two vacancies.

I should like to ask a supplementary question. In view of the fact that the Minister of Veterans Affairs misled the public by his statement on May 2—

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I point out to the hon. member that a question should not be preceded by a statement of that kind. If he would give us his supplementary question perhaps we could get to the point quickly.

Mr. Churchill: In view of the fact that there were two vacancies on the pensions commission when the government took office on April 22, I should like to ask the minister why he found it necessary, as he stated, to create a vacancy when those two were in existence; and will he immediately correct the imbalance on the pensions commission and reinstate Mr. McKay so that representation may be restored for first world war veterans and for western Canada?