

Oral Questions

ing that it was only transmitted to the provincial government in the last week or two. I do not know the exact time, but it was recent. On the other hand, and in answer to the second question, I think it might be improper for me to approach the provincial attorney general and put any kind of pressure on him either to take proceedings or not to take proceedings. That is his responsibility.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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NATIONAL DEFENCE**PLANS FOR CARRYING OUT PRIMARY DEFENCE ROLE IN VIEW OF EXPENDITURE ON THE ORION**

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Defence. Yesterday the minister acknowledged that the government will proceed to spend \$1 billion on 18 aircraft on the absurd assumption that such aircraft will help head off a protracted land war in Europe. I should like to ask the minister how the government plans now—having committed all that money for the next few years in that direction—to meet its primary defence position as stated in the white paper on defence, namely, the protection of Canadian sovereignty, and most specifically I am thinking of the commitment to protect Canadian shorelines for Canadian fishermen in the years ahead.

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I replied to the hon. member that the aircraft we are purchasing will in fact help us protect Canadian sovereignty. Beyond that we do have other funds available to carry out the other programs, for instance, to keep the tracker aircraft, which are our coastal surveillance aircraft, flying. We have the funds, despite the large expenditure for the long range patrol aircraft.

● (1420)

Mr. Broadbent: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister suggesting that the kind of complex, expensive equipment that will be put in the Orions if the government goes ahead with its decision is the kind that is appropriate for the surveillance of our coastal waters that will be required if the government proceeds, for example, with the 200 mile fishing limit, as it indicated it would? Is the minister saying that we have to spend \$1 billion on 18 aircraft to fulfil that kind of role?

Mr. Richardson: No, Mr. Speaker, I am definitely not saying that. The primary role of a long range patrol aircraft is an anti-submarine role, but it also has capabilities that will assist in the surveillance of our coasts and of the north.

LOCKHEED CONTRACT—POSSIBILITY OF GREATER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY PURCHASE OF DASH-7R

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I am sure the minister would acknowledge that the Orion aircraft will not have

[Mr. Allmand.]

anything to do at all with the protection of sovereignty; the minister knows that. With reference to an answer that the minister gave yesterday about the long range employment possibilities to Canada that would accrue from the Orion decision, may I ask him the following question. Would he not admit that by purchasing the appropriate number of Dash-7R aircraft, whose air frames are produced in Canada and whose engines are also produced in Canada, and by re-equipping the appropriate number of Argus aircraft, the minister would not only get more aircraft that would fulfil the job with which he is concerned, but would produce more Canadian jobs at considerably less expense to Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, those options have been examined carefully, not only with regard to military capability but also with regard to industrial benefits. As I have stated, the industrial benefits to Canada are greater with the Lockheed purchase than they would be with the purchase of the Dash-7 or the refitting of the Argus. Further, the Dash-7 is not a long range patrol aircraft. It has not got the range to do the job, and it would take at least seven or eight Dash-7's to do the work that two Orions could perform.

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[Translation]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**INQUIRY AS TO WHETHER MINISTER STUDIED TESTIMONY OF JUSTICE LAMER AT INQUIRY BEFORE APPOINTMENT AS LAW REFORM COMMISSION CHAIRMAN**

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Minister of Justice.

Without revealing the content of the testimony of Mr. Justice Antonio Lamer at the inquiry on organized crime, can the Minister of Justice tell the House today, as a follow-up to my questions of March 24 and 31, whether he took personal knowledge of the said testimony before giving Mr. Justice Lamer such an important responsibility as the one of presiding over the Law Reform Commission?

[English]

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Justice): No, Mr. Speaker. I understand that matter was examined by the deputy at the time of the original question.

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[Translation]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**POSSIBILITY OF INVESTIGATING FRIENDS OF JUSTICE LAMER BEFORE APPOINTMENT AS LAW REFORM COMMISSION CHAIRMAN**

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I would rather ask a supplementary of the Solicitor General since it seems to me I will never get anything out of the Minister of Justice. The Solicitor General was there a moment ago. I would appreciate it if he could go back to his seat.