

tions, and after the department gives the answers to the parliamentary secretary he takes them to the Privy Council where they get lost in the morass. I cannot see why they are unable to answer such a simple question in less than three months.

I am tempted to run this into two points of order and to include both questions I am complaining about tonight under the same point of order. My next question is similar to the one raised by my colleague who has just spoken. It is question No. 2,035 which reads:

1. Was a Canadian forces 707 aircraft committed to the Prime Minister's use during his recent European-African-South American trip and, if so, for how many days and hours?

2. Were other service aircraft committed and, if so, for how many days and hours?

3. What was the total itemized cost for transportation of the entire trip?

I asked this, Madam Speaker, because I like to keep track of the money the Department of National Defence is spending. I am quite aware of the system they have used previously for working out the cost of a variety of flights of members and cabinet ministers. It was simplified almost to the extent of using a template. You just moved it to the type of aircraft and the number of hours. They would multiply the figures for you and give you the cost. It is quite simple. I did not make it complex. I did not ask for the extra cost of the Prime Minister's party being lost for a week in Austria. I did not ask if they had phoned for substitutes for the avocados he missed so much. I did not ask if they had to rent those running shoes which he was shown wearing in Brazil. It was nothing complicated at all. I did not ask if he had to stay in a hotel in Algeria because nobody would speak to him. I think these answers should be forthcoming as quickly as possible, and I am looking forward to hearing from the parliamentary secretary in a few days. I am sorry the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Lamontagne) is not here because I would like to say I do not believe it is the fault of the Department of National Defence, and there is no truth to the rumour that he is attending NATO exercises in Poland.

Mr. Collette: Madam Speaker, I regret that the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) appears to believe that the question asked by her colleague, the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon), is so funny. I think he has a legitimate and very serious question and I shall do my best to get the answers.

I would say to the hon. member for Victoria, however, that he answered his own question a few minutes ago when he said he could easily go to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence when the estimates are before that committee to get the information he sought through the Order Paper. This proves one of the points I have been raising from time to time, that a lot of the questions on the Order Paper are unnecessary. I would respectfully suggest the hon. member should take that route if he is assured of getting such a quick answer. Certainly I am doing my best to get an answer from the Department of National Defence.

With respect to question No. 2,035, it is linked to the question previously raised by the hon. member for York-Peel

concerning the Prime Minister's recent visit. I expect that when an answer to that question comes, we can also expect an answer to question No. 2,035 since they are linked.

Madam Speaker: I had urged the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council to answer each question as it was raised, but I had no idea that this many questions would be asked. I will leave it to his discretion, whether he wants to answer them all at once or as they are asked. He had asked me if he could do that, but there are so many now. I leave it to his discretion.

Mr. Clark: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, on that matter. We have heard a great deal tonight about the importance of observing the customs and practices of the House of Commons. The custom of the House of Commons has been for a specific answer to be given to a question that was put specifically on Order Paper matters. I am sure Your Honour would want to retain that kind of consistency in ruling, and I am sure you would not want to allow the parliamentary secretary to depart from that consistency. Naturally I would leave it to him to exercise his judgment in his usual way to ensure that he responds specifically to each specific question that is raised.

Madam Speaker: I would point out to the Leader of the Opposition that the custom goes both ways. This is left to the discretion of the parliamentary secretary. A while ago I urged him to answer the questions one by one because I thought this would be more orderly, but now that I see there are a lot of questions and time is running out, I leave it to his discretion. There is nothing wrong with the custom. It has been done before.

Mr. McKinnon: Madam Speaker, my point of order arises out of what the parliamentary secretary just said, that I could ask these questions at the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence. He is quite right, except that at the time I wanted the answers, which was three months ago, there were no estimates before the House. I am surprised to hear him suggesting that I should be putting questions like this in committee when the committee is not sitting.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McKinnon: The other reason is that I am not unaware what happens if you try to obtain answers to oral questions that are detailed. That is what the Order Paper is for. If a question is detailed you are supposed to give the routine an opportunity to work. Unfortunately, it is not working very well these days and that is why there are so many people here with points of order.

Mr. Waddell: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Obviously this is a complete farce and sham—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: He is out of order.