

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton South): A supplementary question to the Minister of National Defence, Mr. Speaker. The minister has just informed the house that it would not be possible to give all these armouries protection overnight. Would he now explain to the house why it is not possible to get enough unemployed men in this country to protect these armouries?

[Later:]

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister arising out of questions posed to the Minister of National Defence. I wonder whether the Prime Minister would take the necessary precautions to place protection around the person of the minister in the event that he may be stolen, although it may be a good idea.

[Later:]

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary North): I should like to ask the Minister of National Defence if he is now in a position to answer the question I asked yesterday concerning the amount of FN rifle ammunition that was stolen, and the availability of that ammunition from commercial sources. I think this information is particularly important in view of the fact these thefts are continuing.

Mr. Hellyer: Yes, I am. The total amount of FN rifle ammunition stolen at Montreal was 1,922 rounds. In so far as the second part of the question is concerned, this ammunition is the military equivalent of the .308 sporting ammunition, and in consequence can be purchased at any sporting goods store and can be used in the FN rifle.

Mr. Fairweather: The stores are not open at night, though.

PARENT, QUE.—INQUIRY RESPECTING RADAR STATION

On the orders of the day:

[Translation]

Mr. Gerard Laprise (Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence.

Could the minister tell the house if his department intends to end or reduce its operations at the Parent radar station, in the riding of Chapleau?

[Text]

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I should like to thank the hon. member for giving me notice of this question. As has already been announced, a study has been undertaken of the ground environment radar systems we have in connection with the North American air defence,

to determine if they can be reduced in any way without reducing the effectiveness of the system. So far no decision has been reached in respect of any individual changes that might be made.

[Translation]

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary question?

Does that mean that the radar station personnel could be reduced?

[Text]

Mr. Hellyer: I cannot say what the effect might be on personnel until I know what the decision is.

REPORTED FALLING OFF IN RECRUITING FOR NAVY

On the orders of the day:

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary North): In view of the drastic falling off in recruiting for the Royal Canadian Navy, I wonder if the Minister of National Defence could tell us what steps the government is taking to restore public confidence in the future of the navy and thus to increase the intake of men.

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): I am glad to advise the hon. gentleman that his question is based on an erroneous report. The R.C.N. took into the force in December precisely the number of men it wanted, the number for which it had vacancies. They have a long backlog, a long waiting list, and there is no shortage of applicants. They tell me they can get all the keen young recruits they need, and that they will have enough men throughout the coming year.

HALIFAX—REASON FOR CANCELLATION OF NAVAL RESERVE UNIT

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton South): I wish to address a question to the Minister of National Defence. Was the naval reserve unit at Halifax cancelled on the recommendation of the navy?

Mr. Speaker: It appears to me that this is certainly the type of question which should be placed on the order paper, unless the minister has a ready answer.

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): My problem is this. I am not sure that I should confirm or deny on what basis ministerial action is taken. I think there is some constitutional problem with respect to that.

Mr. MacInnis: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The minister has said that he should not break a confidence, or something to that effect, but I would call to his attention the fact that it has already been broken in the city of Halifax.