

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): There have been some recent increases in the surveillance and scrutiny of passengers and their baggage. We are very conscious of the growing threat to aircraft from this source and we are taking as effective measures as we can. I think the hon. member realizes, however, what an extremely difficult problem it is because no one knows where the next strike may occur. It may occur in places that appear to be very innocent and that are not involved in any particular international dispute. This is a problem that is faced not only by Canada but by all countries of the world, and we are trying to keep our security measures abreast of the threat. Needless to say, we could not guarantee, nor could anyone in the world, that there would not be another incident some place.

HIJACKING—POSSIBLE PILOTS' STRIKE—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): My supplementary question is to the minister. In light of the declaration by the pilots association that they intend to have a strike on June 19 as worldwide as possible because of this problem, would the minister advise the House whether the government has taken cognizance of this fact and, in the absence of the Minister of Transport, what steps will be taken in conjunction with the Canadian Airline Pilots Association to deal with this potential strike and the problem that gives rise to it?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will inform my colleague, the Minister of Transport, about these inquiries today, and I am quite sure that when he is in the House early next week he will be very happy to deal directly with them.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. A number of hon. members are seeking to ask supplementaries, including the hon. member for Moose Jaw and the hon. member for Skeena. For the moment the Chair will try to complete the first round of questioning and then return to this important matter in a few minutes.

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INFORMATION CANADA

ALLEGED FAILURE TO SUPPLY ADEQUATE
INFORMATION TO PUBLIC ABOUT GOVERNMENT
ACTIVITIES—REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF EXPENDITURE

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I have some questions for the Acting Prime Minister. In view of the conclusion reached in four studies commissioned by Information Canada that, despite large expenditures, Canadian citizens are not receiving adequate information about government activities, would the Acting Prime Minister inform the House whether steps are being contemplated to remedy the situation, and would he also undertake to make a statement or to have the Prime Minister or the Minister of Labour make a statement to the House within the next few days as to precisely what steps are being proposed?

[Mr. Skoberg.]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, the purpose in forming Information Canada was to try to improve the communication of government information to the public and to try to get some feedback in response. I do not think it is any surprise that we have not been wholly successful, and I am very glad to have the support of the leader of the NDP that we should try again.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, let not the Acting Prime Minister conclude that I am supporting Information Canada, as he may gather from another question I shall ask. I suggest these are very serious matters. In view of the fact that the total expenditures on government information projected for the year 1972-73 are some \$63 million, compared with \$39 million in the previous year, an increase of over 60 per cent, would the Acting Prime Minister undertake to review on an urgent basis this huge expenditure of taxpayers' money on activities which do not seem to be justified by the results?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, the government has these matters under review at all times. I am not prepared, however, to accept the premise of the leader of the NDP that these expenditures are unjustified. I would have thought from his previous question that he felt it was necessary to improve and to enlarge the facilities for making information available.

Mr. Lewis: My question implied nothing of the sort, certainly not an enlargement. My question was based on conclusions which show that these heavy expenditures of taxpayers' money are useless so far as Canadian citizens are concerned. In view of the fact that the Acting Prime Minister himself admitted that the purpose of Information Canada was to improve government services and also admitted it has not been successful, may I ask him whether the government is giving serious consideration to dismantling Information Canada which is proving to be a totally useless agency in the expenditure of taxpayers' money?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member will appreciate that that is argument, debate or a representation rather than a question, especially in view of the form in which it was placed. Perhaps the Chair might recognize a supplementary.

Mr. Lewis: May I rephrase my supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will be recognized for that purpose, and then the hon. member for Peace River on a supplementary.

Mr. Lewis: I want to ask the Acting Prime Minister whether, in view of his admission that Information Canada has not served the purpose that was intended for it, the government intends to dismantle that organization that is not serving the people of Canada and is spending considerable amounts of money?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, what I said was that we had not achieved the purpose we had in mind and that we had the matter under review. I hope Information Canada will still