

Inquiries of the Ministry

made about the terrible reporting of his statement I wonder since we have Information Canada now, whether he will try to get the proper position put forward through that organization?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think we should go on to another subject.

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INQUIRY OF THE MINISTRY

Mr. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. While I congratulate the minister on the white paper he tabled today, I wonder whether he would correct the oversight he made on Friday night, now acknowledged, in that Al Phaneuf did participate in the Grey Cup game, and that he and the Alouettes did a terrific job in bringing the Grey Cup back to Montreal?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I certainly do congratulate the Montreal Alouettes and offer my most sincere apologies to Mr. Phaneuf.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CANADIAN POSITION ON SALE OF ARMS BY GREAT
BRITAIN TO SOUTH AFRICA

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister of which I have given him notice. Will he help reconcile the apparent shift in government policy from what I thought was a rather firm position opposing the sales of arms by Britain to South Africa, as set out in the Prime Minister's letter to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom last July, in light of an answer given by the Secretary of State for External Affairs on this topic in London last Friday night?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Well, Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member suggests the position of the government was made known to Mr. Heath in my letter of July and the position remains the same. Because the hon. member was good enough to give me notice of his question, I did look quickly at the article to which I believe he referred. All I can say is that the conclusions drawn in that story obviously are those of the writer. They do not represent the position of the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Naturally, it is our desire that this issue or any issue will not force a break up of the Commonwealth. But to brand efforts to avoid the breaking up of the Commonwealth as waffling or softening is to confuse diplomacy with strident shouting.

Mr. Fairweather: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Prime Minister for his positive answer. Before he leaves for the Conference of Prime Ministers in Singapore in January, I wonder whether he would consider commenting one way or the other on the issue of whether a member of the Commonwealth, in his opinion, may take a unilateral

[Mr. McCutcheon.]

policy decision which could result in a very fundamental change in the nature and make-up of the Commonwealth. I do not ask for a policy statement today.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Since the hon. member is suggesting that the comment not be made now perhaps there will be an opportunity for the Prime Minister to do this on motions some time.

SUGGESTION BY SOMALIA RESPECTING ELIMINATION
OF TRADE WITH SOUTH AFRICA

Mr. Doug Rowland (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, this question is for the Prime Minister. Has the government of Canada had an opportunity to evaluate the suggestion put forward by the government of Somalia to the United Nations that South Africa's major trading partners hold meetings to discuss ways and means of eliminating their trade with South Africa and, if so, is the government of Canada considering initiating such consultations?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as I understand the question I take it that the consultations have been suggested by a government and therefore that government has taken the initiative. I see nothing new about it. It is a matter which has been discussed at the United Nations for quite some time; that is, whether or not something should be done about trading with South Africa. The member knows the answer which has been given by the major trading nations.

Mr. Rowland: Mr. Speaker, the question which was put is a pretty specific one. I should like to ask the Prime Minister once again whether the government has examined the specific suggestion made by Somalia that the major trading partners—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member is repeating the question in exactly the same terms.

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AIR TRANSPORT

BASING OF FARES BY CERTAIN AIRLINES ON CANADIAN
DOLLAR PEGGED AT 92 CENTS

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Last week I asked the acting minister whether the government had taken action to deal with the overcharging of Canadian air passengers on international flights originating in Canada. The acting minister indicated the minister would reply as soon as possible.

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Well, Mr. Speaker, the matter quite properly was referred to my colleague, the Minister of Transport, and is before the Air Transport Committee of the Transportation Commission. I hope my colleague will have more to say on this matter in the House tomorrow. In the meantime, it is perfectly clear that the present arrangements are due to an international arrangement