

tricity, oil, natural gas, coal or other mineral resources? If he has done the study and analysis, would the minister table the complete analysis in this House at the earliest opportunity, and would the minister—I am not interested in the minister quoting the Cigol case because—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, I can only tell the hon. member that a number of legal opinions have been prepared by ministers of justice over the years concerning energy and constitutional matters. I think the hon. member also knows that all such legal opinions are privileged and, according to Beauchesne, they are not of a nature to be tabled in the House. He knows that.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

EFFICACY OF F-18 FIGHTER PLANES

Mr. Terry Sargeant (Selkirk-Interlake): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Defence. Last week, United States congressman Bruce Vento, referring to the F-18 was quoted as saying, "there is something drastically wrong with this plane . . . the whole business is a boondoggle and it ought to be killed."

This week we have learned that President Carter is giving active, serious consideration to cancelling the entire project because of skyrocketing costs and performance problems. What action is the minister's department now taking to ensure that the Canadian government is not left with bills for an aircraft that the United States government may no longer want?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I would like to reassure hon. members about the F-18. The government has a team looking into the matter and we already have a test pilot who works with the U.S. marines to see if the prototype is working correctly. I shall meet next week with Secretary of Defence Brown and I intend to ask him a few questions about it. As far as I am concerned, however, every criticism about the F-18 now is strictly allegation.

Mr. Sargeant: A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. The minister has said on too many occasions that the problems plaguing the F-18 program are routine and it is not possible for Canada to pay any amount for the CF-18 over and above the contract price, yet an official in his department has said:

We have been relying on the U.S. navy for information about the progress of the F-18 and they have not informed us of any major problems. We have a fixed price incentive type of contract but there is obviously an escalator clause built into it.

In light of this and the pending decision from President Carter, is the minister prepared to turn over to the standing committee all pertinent information regarding costs, testing and performance for thorough review and investigation in

order to assure the Canadian public that their government has not contracted to purchase an aircraft that may never see active duty?

[Translation]

Mr. Lamontagne: Madam Speaker, I think I have already answered that question but if the hon. member wants further information in this connection, I will point out to him that there will be a meeting of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence next Thursday and I will then be ready to answer all the relevant questions of the hon. member.

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[English]

FOREIGN INVESTMENT REVIEW AGENCY

REVIEW OF FOREIGN-OWNED FIRMS IN CANADA—PURCHASES IN CANADA BY MULTINATIONALS

Mr. Ron Irwin (Sault Ste. Marie): Madam Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business conducted a survey which showed that two-thirds of businessmen want a review of major foreign-owned firms in Canada. These multinationals tend to make most of their purchases in their own countries, at the same time avoiding Canadian customs duties through transfer pricing arrangements.

● (1450)

Can the minister assure the House that FIRA will be requested to encourage these companies to make their purchases in Canada in order to stimulate our own economy?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, I am glad to have the support of the Canadian Federation of Small Business for the commitments of this government in the throne speech to amend the law on FIRA to, among other things, create a system of performance review for the larger multinational enterprises on such matters as the kind of activity mentioned by my hon. friend.

I can tell the House that the work on the necessary cabinet documents is quite far advanced. I hope with the support of members of this House we will have favourable approval of these proposals when the legislation is introduced, and I hope it will be possible to do so this fall.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

ACTION TO ALLEVIATE HARDSHIP CONDITIONS ON RESERVES

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Madam Speaker, it has been a few days since the minister tabled, released and has been questioned on a report on Indian conditions in our country—a report which demonstrates in