

Inquiries of the Ministry

Instances of a similar nature have been reported previously in other areas and steps are being taken to explore means and procedures to prevent their recurrence. I sincerely regret the annoyance which has been caused to the residents of Montreal.

Mr. Argue: I asked the minister if the planes in question had permission to undertake this exercise. I take it that they had permission. Is the minister now giving Canadians the assurance that this occurrence will not be repeated?

Mr. Pearkes: As I said, I am investigating ways and means of preventing a recurrence. I have had an investigation going on for some weeks already.

Mr. Argue: That is to say, the planes had the permission of the Canadian government?

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Pearkes: It was a duly authorized flight.

Hon. Paul Hellyer: May I ask a supplementary question of the minister?

[*Later:*]

Mr. Hellyer: I wish to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence. Did the minister say that these planes which had caused the sonic booms over Montreal were F-101 planes? Were they flying from United States bases? The third part of my question is this. Is this plane now under consideration by the government as a replacement for our air defence squadrons?

Mr. Pearkes: This is a rather involved question. In the first place I did not say it was an F-101, but I understand it was. I understand the aircraft came from a United States base in the northeastern states.

Regarding the third question which was asked, I would ask the hon. member to repeat it; it was so mixed up with the others that it did not seem related.

Mr. Hellyer: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Is the F-101 being evaluated by the R.C.A.F. or the government as a possible replacement for our nine air defence squadrons, or some of them?

Mr. Pearkes: The R.C.A.F. continue to evaluate aircraft, but there has been no decision to replace the CF-100 with the F-101 or any other plane.

Mr. Hellyer: A supplementary question: Has there been a decision not to?

Mr. Pearkes: I said no decision had been taken to replace them.

[*Mr. Pearkes.*]

INQUIRY AS TO THE PRODUCTION OF
NERVE GASES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence. Would the minister care to comment on the statement in the *Financial Post* of March 26, attributed to James M. Minifie, in which it states that Canada is producing nerve gases which are perhaps even more deadly than H-bombs?

Hon. G. R. Pearkes (Minister of National Defence): I really could not say whether Canada is producing this gas or not. I know there is a defensive chemical warfare investigation establishment at Suffield in Alberta. I do not think they are experimenting with nerve gases which are more deadly than H-bombs.

Mr. Argue: In view of the minister's assurance on other occasions that such a thing was not happening, I would ask him to make a thorough inquiry also, in the light of the fact that such production is prohibited by the 1925 Geneva protocol.

Mr. Pearkes: I can assure the hon. member that we should not go against that protocol.

LABOUR CONDITIONS

WINTER WORKS—REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF
PROGRAM

On the orders of the day:

Mr. John Pratt (Jacques Cartier-Lasalle): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour. Has the minister received a telegram from Mr. George Mooney, executive director of the federation of mayors and municipalities, in which he requests, on behalf of the federation, to have the municipal winter works program extended from the end of April to the end of May, in order that the municipalities may have an opportunity to conclude their programs of winter work? If so, has the government given any consideration to this request?

Hon. Michael Starr (Minister of Labour): I have received such a telegram. I have submitted this request to the government and, after careful consideration, it has been decided to accept this suggestion. An announcement of this extension to the end of May will be made this afternoon by telegram to all the provinces.

UNEMPLOYMENT—REQUEST FOR LATEST
STATISTICS

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Paul Martin (Essex East): I should like to ask a supplementary question. Will the minister now give the figures we asked