

*Inquiries of the Ministry***PUBLIC SERVICE****SALARIES OF NURSES IN HALIFAX-DARTMOUTH AREA**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct this question to the President of the Treasury Board. Could the minister now reply to the question I asked on February 9 with regard to the salaries paid nurses in federal employ in the Halifax-Dartmouth area?

Hon. E. J. Benson (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the officials of my department have been in consultation with the officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs with regard to this particular matter. I hope to be able to say something about it shortly.

FINANCE**INTEREST RATES ON SMALL BUSINESS AND FARM IMPROVEMENT LOANS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Will the government take immediate steps to revise the present statutory interest rates under the Small Businesses Loans Act and the Farm Improvement Loans Act? I ask this question at the present time as it has become almost impossible to obtain loans under either of these acts because of present high interest rates and the short supply of money available for loans by chartered banks.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have already answered questions of this kind, and I refer the hon. gentleman to *Hansard*.

Mr. Nesbitt: Mr. Speaker, I realize that questions of a similar nature have been asked; that is why I prefaced my question with the words "immediate steps".

Mr. C. S. Smallwood (Battle River-Camrose): Mr. Speaker, some time ago I asked the minister a similar question, at which time he informed the house he was planning to bring in amendments to the Farm Improvement Loans Act. Will the minister indicate when we can expect those amendments to come before the house?

Mr. Sharp: I am not in a position to say; this depends, of course, on how long the present part of this session lasts. The matter is under consideration.

[Mr. Sharp.]

AIR TRANSPORT**USE OF COMMERCIAL AIR LANES BY RUSSIAN MILITARY PLANES**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Transport in a position to answer the questions I asked on February 19 in respect of the intrusion into commercial air lanes, if any occurred, by Russian military planes which flew parallel to the coast of Newfoundland? At that time he undertook, in co-operation with the Minister of National Defence, to obtain an answer.

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, it has been determined that at the time of the interception these planes were in international air space. They were followed constantly by radar throughout this period and were at all times under close observation, so there was no threat to civil aviation.

Mr. Harkness: Since they were intruding into commercial air lanes, contrary to international agreement, has any protest been made in connection with this action on the part of these Russian planes?

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Speaker, I understand that Russia is not a signatory to the international air transport association agreement, although when Russian aircraft operate on transatlantic commercial flights they do so within the regulations of the agreement. Otherwise there is no requirement on the part of Russia to observe the rules, and I guess their military planes consequently do not.

THE MINISTRY**PROPOSED RESIGNATION OF CANDIDATES FOR PARTY LEADERSHIP**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, in view of the very proper action by the Minister of Trade and Commerce in resigning his portfolio before becoming a leadership candidate, I should like to request the Acting Prime Minister to ask the Prime Minister whether he is going to take the proper action of calling on other candidates to do the same.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest that question does not fall within the administrative responsibility of the Acting Prime Minister.