

arises from an alarming increase in the number of documented cases of Hansen's disease, more commonly referred to as leprosy. The department has informed me that cases of leprosy in Canada have increased dramatically—there were 38 in 1965, 51 in 1970, 92 in 1975 and 99 last year. Can the minister explain this increase? Is it possible that our health checks are proving inadequate? Can he advise us what has been done by his immigration officials abroad to make sure that a person suffering from leprosy is not admitted to Canada?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Health checks are, of course, made but as a result of the hon. member's interest and the question he placed on the order paper I have asked my officials to take a long, hard look at the situation.

Mr. Epp: I thank the minister for that answer. Has he taken any steps, in conjunction with officials of the Department of National Health and Welfare to document the threat to Canadian health which these cases may be presenting? What steps are being taken to make sure that the disease, to the extent that it is communicable, is not spread in other areas of Canada?

Mr. Cullen: The officials of the Department of National Health and Welfare engaged in these tasks are highly competent and I know they work in close contact with their provincial counterparts. Given the dramatic increase about which the hon. member has spoken, I am certain they are watching the situation closely.

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● (1450)

AIR TRANSPORT

FAILURE OF EMERGENCY LOCATER TRANSMITTERS AND CROSS POSITION INDICATORS—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. J. R. Ellis (Hastings): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. I wonder if we could ask him to leave the seat of his successor and perhaps answer my question.

At the time the regulations were put into effect, I asked the previous minister of transport a question with regard to research and Canadian manufacture of emergency locater transmitters and cross-position indicators. Since that time there have been many hundreds of failures causing many thousands of dollars worth of search and rescue activity falsely occasioned. I wonder if the minister can tell me now whether there have been any studies or research done, or are any going to be done, into the problems of the CPI's and ELT's that might take some of the strain off private flyers?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Yes, Mr. Speaker, the question of a superior kind of ELT has been under examination, including the costs of a change and the reliability of any successor equipment. I have not looked at the

state of the analysis for several weeks now. I will be glad to do that and bring a further report.

Mr. Ellis: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Transport. May I ask the minister if his research is going into the problem of batteries for the ELTs as well?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, it goes into the whole question at the present time.

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TOURISM

LOSS OF REVENUE AS RESULT OF REFUSAL OF UNITED STATES TO ALLOW DEDUCTION OF CONVENTION EXPENSES—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister. My question has to do with section 602 of the tax reform act of the United States which reads, in part, that Americans travelling abroad for conventions should not be allowed to deduct expenses from their taxes. Since this has caused a good deal of consternation and a loss of many hundreds of thousands of dollars to cities such as Toronto, Winnipeg, Montreal and Vancouver in lost convention revenues, I would like to ask the minister if the government has made an active solicitation to the American government, specifically the president, and could he inform the House, if they have done so, as to what reply there has been?

Mr. Hugh Poulin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister was in Washington meeting with President Carter, he raised this problem with him. When the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce visited his counterpart, the Secretary of Commerce in the United States, the matter was also discussed. Canadian authorities are still pressing the United States government to review the matter in the hope that a change can be made to relieve the Canadian tourist industry.

Mr. Murta: Mr. Speaker, I believe the particular section to which I alluded comes up for debate in Congress in July, when there will be public hearings held and technical changes can be made at that time. Can the parliamentary secretary give the House a firm commitment that further representation, as strong as possible, will be made to the United States Congress to see whether this severe injustice can be corrected?

Mr. Poulin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise the hon. member the United States Senate voted on such a motion within the last two weeks, and unfortunately it was defeated by two votes. I want to assure the hon. member that further representations are being made with the United States Congress in the hope that this matter can be relieved at the earliest possible time. There are ongoing discussions, as always, between Canada and the United States on these and other tax matters.