

Oral Questions

the cabinet decision. He was stating it and then asking that it be referred for discussion to the officials. As I said to the House a couple of days ago, I think it was an honest error on his part and would have been cleared up by the committee had the letter proceeded in the normal way rather than being leaked to the press. I am obviously still distressed about that aspect of it—that a letter between the highest security officer and the second highest one would be leaked in that way. I think it is of concern to every member of the House, too, that a leak which is obviously destined to destroy my reputation and credibility should have been deliberately put into the hands of the press and treated that way by the press. I am thinking of the editorial in the *Sun* this morning or yesterday morning which is obviously scurrilous, inaccurate and venomous.

REQUEST FOR TABLING OF GUIDELINES ON SECURITY
SCREENING—AUTHORIZATION OF ALLEGED RAID ON OFFICE
OF TORONTO "SUN"

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the Prime Minister consider tabling for the House and the country the guidelines in respect of the activities of the RCMP in this area? Also, would he give this House an assurance, since he seems to be rather concerned about the activities of the *Sun*, that no member of cabinet authorized the raid by the RCMP on the office of the Toronto *Sun* which just took place this morning.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I cannot believe my ears, Mr. Speaker. If it is true—

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AIRPORTS

DATE OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF GRANTS TO BUILD AND UPDATE
FACILITIES IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

Mr. Hugh A. Anderson (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Members were advised by his department that in March announcements would be made regarding grants to build airports and to update those already in existence in small communities. Can the minister advise the House when this announcement will be made, as many communities are being seriously inconvenienced by the delay and uncertainty of funding?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have no immediate date to announce but I will take the hon. member's representation seriously and look into the situation.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

COMMUNICATIONS

POSSIBILITY GOVERNMENT TELEPHONE COMPANIES WILL BE
PROHIBITED FROM OWNING CABLEVISION STATIONS—
SUGGESTED PUBLIC HEARINGS

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Communications. In view of the exchange we had yesterday, it is clear that the minister did have conversations with several ministers of communications, particularly those of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, on the subject of government telephone ownership of cable television, notwithstanding the matter was before the CRTC and parliament. I wonder if the minister could assure the House that before anything definitive on such a major change in government policy as the ownership of cable TV plant takes place, the matter could be either given to the CRTC for an open hearing of all interested parties or at least be referred to a committee of the House, so that other parties could put their views forward?

[Translation]

Hon. Jeanne Sauv  (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I am a little confused by the question of the hon. member. If he means the ownership of cablevision infrastructure, I can only repeat that there has been no such change in the policy. The CRTC still requires specific conditions before granting a licence, including that cablevision companies must own the largest part of the infrastructure although it has never made it a matter of general policy.

I repeat, I discussed this matter of cablevision infrastructure ownership with the ministers of Saskatchewan and Manitoba and with other persons. Did I discuss it with regard to applications now before the CRTC concerning licence granting? No. I discussed it only in general terms because it is a problem of interest to provincial ministers of communications. I do not intend to intervene whatsoever in the process of regulations of the CRTC.

[English]

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's rather lengthy answer. Because of the importance of the ownership of cable TV plant, however, and the fact that the discussions were with the ministers of Saskatchewan and Manitoba about government telephone ownership of cable TV plants, and that there are other areas of telephone ownership of cable TV plants, could that larger question be directed to the CRTC for a public hearing of all interested parties, some of whom obviously were not involved in the discussions with the minister? If that is not possible could the minister discuss with the House leader if an appropriate committee could have a discussion and hearing on this very important issue?

Mrs. Sauv : Mr. Speaker, the suggestion is an interesting one. I suppose there is a point at which this whole question of ownership could be referred to a public audience held by the CRTC. That is one way of dealing with the matter. Another way, of course, is to formulate a general policy regarding ownership of television plants to be discussed by myself and the provincial ministers. At a later stage when Phase II of the legislation goes through the House, when I table it, perhaps it will be a little more clear how I can impart to the CRTC matters of general policy.