

HARBOURS

REQUEST FOR REPORT ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH QUEBEC FOR
WHARVES ON ST. LAWRENCE RIVER

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Transport.

Since negotiations between the federal and provincial governments concerning the wharves which provide communications facilities along the St. Lawrence have been going on for around three years, would the minister tell the House whether these negotiations will one day come to an end? Will they produce results or are we going to negotiate for the rest of this century?

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the negotiations have been going on a long time and I am trying to ensure that they are brought to a conclusion. But, of course, in negotiations of this sort where two parties are involved it is not always possible for one to do anything about it.

[Translation]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a supplementary question.

Of course I understand there are two parties involved in this process, but would the minister tell the House whether since the arrival of a new government in Quebec there have been some talks with the new Quebec minister in charge and whether he seems prepared to come to a logical agreement which would better serve the Quebec population in this area?

[English]

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I have not had such a meeting with the minister of transport in the province since the change of government. We have a regular committee structure of both officials and ministers in the two transport departments, and I look forward to such a meeting before very long.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

STATIONING OF FRENCH LANGUAGE UNIT AT CFB
GREENWOOD—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. I should like to ask him whether, in view of his interesting trip to Nova Scotia and particularly to CFB Greenwood, his comments there about the establishment of a French language unit at Base Greenwood is a definitive announcement, notwithstanding the fact that I wrote his predecessor in office on December 3, 1975 a two and one-half page letter asking that at least six serious considerations be taken into account before an announcement is made and asking for a reply to that letter. Can the minister tell us the present status of the matter?

Oral Questions

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I made it quite clear in Halifax and in Greenwood, as well as in discussions with the troops in Greenwood, that indeed the spirit of the French language will continue. This has received overwhelming support from the people on the base and from the fine people in that area in Nova Scotia. As I indicated at that time, the details are to be worked out so that we can do it in a constructive way that will bring the best results for all the people involved, and this is the spirit in which that French language unit is proceeding at Greenwood.

Mr. Nowlan: My colleague from Edmonton has a supplementary question, but first I have a very short supplementary question to put to the minister. It is very short.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nowlan: Unfortunately, such questions do not take into account plus or minus the spirit of the French language. In my letter—I and other members of the House voted for the act overwhelmingly in 1968—the spirit of the language was taken into account. My question is put in view of the fact that this was a political decision overriding military considerations, and in view of the fact that Greenwood is a NATO base in which the English language is the language of communication with the French, the Dutch and the German pilots, if there are such French pilots, why did the department not take into consideration the counterproposal to establish a unilingual French unit at CFB Summerside, a search and rescue unit, where French and English are used in communication with the ground, since that base has jurisdiction over northern New Brunswick and Quebec?

Mr. Danson: As I pointed out, that was my impression, but I have no right to speak on behalf of the hon. gentleman, and I would be surprised if the representative of parliament in that area objected to this procedure. If one wants to raise excuses for not doing these things, one can find lots of them. But if you want to find the reasons for doing so and for taking advantage of an opportunity, as the men on the base want to do, we will find them and it will be done in a positive and constructive way.

REASON FOR MOVING UNILINGUAL FRENCH UNIT FROM
EDMONTON

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of National Defence. The minister has been haranguing the good people of Nova Scotia because some of them questioned the wisdom of having a unilingual French-speaking Argus squadron attempting to operate in close co-operation with other unilingual English-speaking units. At the same time the minister is moving No. 1 Commando unit of the airborne regiment, a unilingual French unit, out of Edmonton where it had been warmly welcomed and has contributed a great deal to better understanding between the French and the English. Can the minister explain his policy which tries to force a unilingual