

Oral Questions

the hon. member, though I will draw the hon. member's representation on this point to his attention.

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[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORT

INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN DECISION ON TAKEOVER OF NORDAIR

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport.

Can the minister tell us whether he has reached a decision about the offers received a few days ago for the sale of Nordair?

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): No, Mr. Speaker. We have been looking at many propositions in relation to the shares of Nordair, and of course we shall want to take into full account all the representations which have been put forward to me or to Air Canada. I expect we shall be able to make a decision very soon.

[Translation]

Mr. Beaudoin: Mr. Speaker, on a supplementary.

Would the minister tell us whether his decision will also take into account the recommendations of Quebec and Ontario which, according to the information we have been getting at our offices, would like to have a strong regional carrier for the greater well-being of each of those provinces?

[English]

Mr. Lang: I can assure hon. members that we will take every representation made to us into account and give appropriate weight to each one.

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LOTO CANADA

TICKET SALES IN DRAW NO. 12

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker my question is addressed to the Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport): it relates to Loto Canada. Early in March, Loto Canada attempted to boost lagging ticket sales for draw 12 by issuing to wholesalers hundreds of gold pouches containing \$5 cheques and instructing wholesalers that retailers were to receive one \$5 gold pouch for each 25 tickets purchased.

Can the minister confirm that, since Loto Canada decided that retailers could keep these \$5 cheques even if they returned for a refund the tickets they had ordered from Loto Canada, it is clearly possible for retailers to put in last-minute orders for tickets they know they cannot sell, simply in order to collect the \$5 gold pouches?

Hon. Iona Campagnolo (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Yes, Mr. Speaker, the pouched \$5 cheques to which the hon. member refers are part of Loto Canada's usual incentive program, though in a different style, designed to assist our retailers in selling.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mrs. Campagnolo: Perhaps hon. members opposite who are laughing do not have the same low opinion of the retailers in their constituencies as the hon. member seems to have. I believe the corporation has taken every precaution to avoid abuse and I expect our retailers will handle this in their usual competent way.

Mr. Beatty: I am afraid the minister is handling it in her usual incompetent way. I have another question to ask. On October 5, she signed an agreement with the provinces. Part of that agreement provided that total prizes offered would be no more than 50 per cent of gross sales and that advertising and promotion costs for all lotteries in Canada would be limited to 4 per cent of total gross sales.

Is the minister aware that in the opinion of the provinces Loto Canada is already in default of this agreement signed as recently as October and, if so, what action does she propose to take to remedy the situation?

● (1430)

Mrs. Campagnolo: Mr. Speaker, if that is so, I suppose it must have to do with the definition of what the media purchase would be in consideration of the 4 per cent figure. If, indeed, Loto Canada is in excess of that, I believe over a period of a year it would appear that we would be on a proper percentage basis. But there is no doubt that the books of Loto Canada would be open for such a discussion, provided all the provinces' lotteries were approached in exactly the same way. I think we could have a mutual auditing of books on this matter.

Mr. Beatty: It would be interesting, also, to hear the minister's comments with regard to total prizes offered and whether or not she has any doubt whatsoever that Loto Canada is in default of the agreement she signed with the provinces.

On Monday, when she spoke to the press, the minister attempted to justify the special deal with Miracle Mart by drawing an analogy to a car dealership which had some employees who did not sell properly. The minister indicated that those people would be, and should be, put off the payroll. How does that analogy apply to Loto Canada's lagging sales, and does the minister intend to put some people at Loto Canada off the payroll?

Mrs. Campagnolo: Mr. Speaker, I am very impressed with the hon. member's concern about our retailers and wholesalers, because his leader would put all 30,000 of them out of their jobs.

An hon. Member: Oh, come on.