

Oral Questions

Canadians want to know what this minister is doing to make matters right and will she quit making excuses for the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mary Collins (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Environment) and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to serve with the Minister of the Environment in the excellent work that he does, but let me clarify it again perhaps in looking at the Treasury Board guidelines. Treasury Board guidelines are not hard and fast. They say that normally there are public tenders but there are exceptions.

• (1445)

In this case the department reviewed the potential people that might be employed. Mr. Small was chosen because of his excellent background and expertise in international work and work related to the environment.

He completed his first contract. He had done the work leading up to UNCED. Further work was going to be required so in the normal course of events he was asked to stay on and complete that work. I think that is logical and is good use of the taxpayers' dollars and I can assure everyone that Mr. Small undertook his work very effectively for us.

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AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

I have in my hand a memo dated March 18 from the assistant deputy minister of aviation to the deputy minister of transport. It outlines a series of cost-cutting measures implemented by the department. A number of them make sense, I will say that right off the top. However a number of them give me great concern as they relate to aviation safety.

The key one that really concerns me is a decision to reduce frequency of dangerous goods inspections to save seven person-years and \$500,000.

I have given the minister a copy of the memo. Will he investigate this to make sure that things like hazardous goods inspections are not decreased? If anything they should be increased. Will he give the House a commitment to do that?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Yes, Madam Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Madam Speaker, the other area where the memo suggests cuts are being made is in the area of air traffic control overtime.

We all know that Pearson has been a nightmare for a number of years. It is particularly worse in the summer-time during construction.

Will the minister revoke the decision to reduce overtime until such time as new air traffic controllers can be put in place so that there is a full complement and not the under-serviced area that is already there?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, the question of safety is of prime importance in the Department of Transport. When Mr. Justice Moshansky tabled his report he reconfirmed that the Canadian skies are safe.

With respect to these reductions I think the hon. member would certainly be condemning the Minister of Transport if attempts to cut the operating budgets were not being made in accordance with the cuts in all other departments.

I can assure him that the cuts are being made at the level of service and not at the level of safety.

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[*Translation*]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. On February 2, I spoke in this House about the case of Mr. Robert Maltais, of Amos, who is waiting to be heard by a Federal Court umpire. I wrote to the Chief Justice, the Hon. James A. Jerome, the same day, and he never acknowledged receipt of my letter.

For months, Mr. Maltais and his family have been anxious about a technical administrative error made in his file by an unemployment insurance computer. Can the minister confirm to me today that an umpire will be in Abitibi soon to hear Mr. Robert Maltais's case as well as the 31 other outstanding cases? I have the feeling that Canada's umpires have forgotten about Abitibi-Témis-