

## Oral Questions

[English]

## AIRPORTS

## CHARLOTTETOWN—TERMINAL BUILDING PROJECT—CALLING OF TENDERS

**Mr. Tom McMillan (Hillsborough):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Earlier in the week the Minister told *The New York Times* in a lengthy interview about federal capital projects that, "right now we are spending \$25 million on a new terminal building for Charlottetown." Does the Minister realize that the Government of Canada has not even called tenders for that terminal building, much less started construction? In light of that fact, will he assure the House and the people of Prince Edward Island that his Department will get on with the job and invite tenders, which are now many years overdue?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a small correction. The figure should have been \$27 million, not \$25 million, allocated for improvements to the Charlottetown airport. As far as calling tenders is concerned, I expect that would be some time in early July. We have sent them back to the consultants for some revisions so that they will be in closer concert with the original Treasury Board submission. There is some technical work that needs to be done before the final tenders are called, but it should be in a matter of about two months.

## REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE PROJECT WILL PROCEED

**Mr. Tom McMillan (Hillsborough):** Mr. Speaker, the redevelopment of the Charlottetown airport and the building of the terminal in particular were announced with great fanfare some seven years ago. Yet announcements have been made over and over again only to be cancelled or postponed, with excuses made for the delays. Will the Minister assure us that this time he and his Department will honour the commitment to the Island, that tenders will be released, that construction will begin, and that we will finally have a terminal building for Charlottetown which is a credit to the capital city of Prince Edward Island, to his Department and, indeed, to the country as a whole?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to confirm the fact that the federal Government is proceeding to call tenders on the work at the Charlottetown airport. We have obviously been greatly assisted by the Minister of Veterans Affairs, the regional minister for that area, in expediting the work, and we are very pleased to know that the work will go ahead on schedule.

[Translation]

## FRANCO-MANITOBAN RIGHTS

## REQUEST FOR DETAILS OF GOVERNMENT'S POSITION

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. In answer to a question I put to him about two weeks ago concerning the language issue in Manitoba and, more specifically, the implications of Section 23 of the Manitoba Act, the Prime Minister answered that Cabinet would be considering the possibility of an appeal, or rather a referral, to the Supreme Court in order to obtain an interpretation of Section 23 of the Manitoba Act, and would also be considering a resolution under Section 43(b) of the Constitution Act of 1982. I wonder whether he could inform the House today whether his Government has reached a conclusion on this matter and whether he could let us know and give us further details on the direction he intends to follow.

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I shall certainly try to answer this question. The present situation is that we are having some final consultations with the Government of Manitoba to find out whether they have any preference for a referral or a resolution. I think it is pretty clear that a political approach, in other words, a resolution in the House that would be effective, is now excluded, especially considering the attitude of the Progressive Conservative Opposition in Manitoba. We shall therefore have to go before the Supreme Court. The Hon. Member is aware there already is a case before the Court—the Bilodeau case—in which we would be making a plea for justice for Franco-Manitobans. There is also the possibility of a referral. This morning, Cabinet agreed on the principle of a referral, but first, we want to have some consultations with the Government of Manitoba and we also want to examine the option of being an intervenor in the Bilodeau case, before deciding when the referral would be made and what its terms would be. A decision will probably be made next week.

\* \* \*

[English]

## PETRO-CANADA

## PRICE OF GASOLINE—CONTRACTS WITH OTHER OIL COMPANIES

**Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and deals with an item which probably has the most serious inflationary effect on consumers of anything in Canada today. That is the high cost of energy, namely, home heating oil and, in particular, gasoline for the car. I wonder if the Minister, who is responsible for Canada's own Petro-Canada, would look into the matter of Petro-Canada signing long-term, 15-year contracts with the Seven Sisters fixing the price of gasoline at the refinery gate? According to evidence supplied, it is costing