

In light of the mounting evidence does the minister still have the audacity to stand up in this House and tell us what a fine job of protecting the resource his department is doing?

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Delta for his question.

As the minister and I have indicated in this House before, there is an independent review going on which the hon. member stood up and asked for. Part of the mandate of that review is to look at enforcement.

Unlike the hon. member across the way, we will look at all facts and will not start making allegations or accusations without getting the facts. That is what the independent review board is all about. Once we have seen the facts this government will act as it has in the past, in a comprehensive, rational and pragmatic way, not in a knee jerking panicky way.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Mr. Speaker, the minister fines fishermen in Newfoundland thousands of dollars for jiggling a few cod for supper and looks the other way while thousands of fish are poached in B.C.

The leaked document and others indicate quite clearly that management problems at DFO extend beyond the Fraser River and beyond the professional capabilities of scientists appointed to the minister's review panel.

Will the minister disband his in-house collection of scientists and request a judicial inquiry into DFO's management of the west coast salmon fishery?

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): No, Mr. Speaker.

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LOW LEVEL FLIGHTS

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville—Milton): Mr. Speaker, environmental assessment hearings surrounding low level test flights over Labrador started last week. The Innu Association of Labrador has chosen not to participate in the hearings because it feels the process has not been an open and fair one.

What assurances can the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Environment give us that the concerns of the Innu are being fairly addressed and that the process is a fair and open one?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, as I reported in the House earlier this week I had an opportunity to meet with representatives of the Innu community yesterday. We had some very broad discussions around the role of the panel. I assured them that if there is one shred of evidence that the panel is biased I will be the first to act to replace panel members.

Oral Questions

Those discussions are continuing. In the absence of any evidence I am working with the Innu and urging them to come back to the table. If they want the environmental process on low level flying to work, their voices need to be heard and the process has to be a fair and open one. We are committed to that fair and open process and we want them to participate.

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[Translation]

AIRPORTS

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, my unexpected question is for the Minister of Transport.

• (1440)

Last July 13, in the middle of summer, when Canadians were on vacation, the Minister of Transport announced a national air transportation strategy. This strategy is patterned on the airport policy which will impact all regions of Quebec and Canada.

Does the minister have a contingency plan to keep airports open, should local airport authorities become unable to fulfill their management mandate?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member just mentioned, the implementation of a national airport policy was made public and three levels of airports were identified. I hope that, with the co-operation of all those concerned, we will succeed in implementing an efficient and safe system, as well as one which will reduce the taxpayers' burden.

We do not want to prejudge how things will go. We have two to five years to come up with final solutions based on problems experienced in each of the affected locations. I hope to be able to count on the hon. member's co-operation to arrive at the best possible solution. If things do not workout, we will review the situation. However, based on the results so far, I am very confident that the system announced last July will be a real success right across the country.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, before making his plan public, did the minister ensure that municipalities had the necessary financial resources to manage regional airports without any reduction in services?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member knows that there are some 725 certified airports in Canada.

Transport Canada is involved in the management of only 150 of those airports, either as owner or operator. Already, in every province, there are airports operating very successfully, without federal involvement. The hon. member for Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans and his colleagues from the opposition keep reminding us of the need to manage our operations efficiently and to reduce the deficit. This is precisely what we are trying to do.