

Mr. Alexander: I want to address a question to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. I have heard some very disturbing news. I do not know whether the minister is aware that on Sunday last a plane coming in from Trinidad with some 86 people aboard landed in Toronto, and that some 30 of the passengers were shuttled off into a corner and subjected to intense interrogation lasting from 12 midnight until eight o'clock in the morning. We are speaking now of a visible minority.

Having given these sentiments some consideration following an exchange with the hon. member for Greenwood, will the minister look into this matter and see that a full investigation is carried out? Surely, we cannot have the world thinking that as far as this country is concerned, people of colour are undesirable.

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): It is a pleasure, once again, to reply to a question by my colleague from the class of '68. On Sunday we shall be celebrating ten years of our presence in this chamber. I am not familiar with the situation to which he has referred. The fact of the matter is that visible minorities are assuredly most welcome in this country. If action of the kind the hon. member has described was taken, I am satisfied my officials had good reason. But I will check to find out why they followed the course they did and why the inquiries were so prolonged.

Mr. Alexander: I would remind the minister that there were 86 passengers aboard this plane and that those who were not bothered were white. To my mind, that raises a number of questions. I do not want to put words in the minister's mouth with respect to discrimination, but since the hon. gentleman visited the city and port of Toronto the other day to explain what our immigration policy is all about, I think it is time he went to Toronto and other ports to advise his officials what the policy really is in terms of discrimination. I think it is time he lowered the boom. This sort of thing is destroying our credibility and is affecting our relations with our Caribbean Commonwealth partners.

Mr. Cullen: Like myself, the hon. member is a lawyer and he will appreciate that I should hear both sides of the story before making the kind of judgment he seems to have made in advance.

Mr. Peters: What lawyer ever did that?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Cullen: I gather that the hon. member for Timiskaming has lost the odd case, Mr. Speaker. As far as visiting my officials is concerned, I do not think that is necessary. They do not practice discrimination and they have been advised both by myself and my deputy minister of our policy with respect to discrimination. We do not want to see any of it.

Oral Questions

TRANSPORT

STUDY OF PASSENGER TRAFFIC IN SOUTHERN ONTARIO

Mr. Bill Kempling (Halton-Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Can the minister advise us the extent of the co-ordination between VIA Rail and GO Transit in the Oshawa-Toronto-Burlington-Hamilton corridor? Is there a joint committee established comprised of representatives of the Department of Transport, VIA Rail, GO Transit and the Ontario ministry of transport and communications to look into the co-ordination of the services in this corridor?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): A joint committee comprising, particularly, representatives from the province of Ontario and the federal government has been examining passenger traffic in the whole of southern Ontario, which would include the corridor to which the hon. member has referred. The officials engaged in this work do, of course, consult widely with the interested operators including VIA Rail, GO Transit and other forms of transportation.

Mr. Kempling: Can the minister advise us whether, in particular, there has been any co-ordination in the location of station facilities in the Oakville-Burlington-Hamilton area? It would seem to make eminent good sense to combine facilities wherever possible and it appears to me this is not likely to happen, particularly in the Burlington-Hamilton area.

Mr. Lang: The general subject of the co-ordination of facilities, including train and bus transport, is of concern to this committee. If the hon. member has a specific case in mind where he thinks development is occurring contrary to this spirit, I would be glad to have the information and to look into the matter.

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MANPOWER

EMPLOYMENT OF IMMIGRANTS

Mr. Hal Herbert (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration: it follows a question put to the minister on Wednesday by my hon. friend from Halton. It concerns a problem on the west island of Montreal; potential immigrants have been refused entry into Canada to fill positions which employers have not been able to fill with Canadian workers.

My question has to do with salary levels and a statement by the minister that there are 150 qualified physicians in Quebec who are unable to secure employment and for whom salary levels considered adequate vary from \$60,000 to \$80,000 per annum. Does the minister continue to insist that a company offering employment for an industrial position requiring medical expertise at a salary level of, say, \$38,000 per annum should be denied access to the services of a competent potential immigrant from the United States because unemployed Canadians have expectations of a salary at twice that level?