

Oral Questions

Mr. Blais: Of course, I have received representations from members of all parties in this House and those representations are being taken seriously.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Madam Speaker, the minister is certainly not in the category of "might have been", he is in the category of "never was" in terms of what his predecessor might or might not have done. Let me say to the minister that it seems to me this policy is a stinging indictment of the operation of Canada Manpower Centres across this country as well as an indictment of the Minister of Employment and Immigration and the capacity of that body to find suitable people to carry out the census, particularly at a time of outstanding unemployment in our country. I simply want to ask the minister specifically whether he will reconsider and allow manpower to obtain these people, so we can be in a position where there will be some impartiality in respect of selection based on merit and not political affiliation?

Mr. Blais: Madam Speaker, I would point out to the hon. gentleman that I am very serious when I indicate that the quality of the individuals who are selected is tested through an objective process, including an interview.

An hon. Member: And Liberal party membership.

Mr. Blais: The system the hon. gentleman refers to is a referral system, namely, how the individuals are referred. I pointed out to him that the referral system is the traditional referral system authorized by Parliament under section 5 of the Statistics Act. In terms of the performance of the individuals, I would point out to him that the Canadian census is recognized internationally as being a superior census and we are going to continue to achieve that end by the employment of individuals who are able to carry forward that responsibility after having conducted a very thorough selection process.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORT**LACK OF FACILITIES IN NORTHWEST NEW BRUNSWICK**

Mr. Eymard Corbin (Madawaska-Victoria): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Although I would like once again to draw his attention to the problem of railway services in my riding, this morning my question relates to transport services generally. I would like to ask him whether his department or the Canadian Transport Commission are planning an early review of the full question of regional transportation within the Atlantic area. I ask this while emphasizing particularly the shortcomings in air services in northwestern New Brunswick, the region I represent in the House, of course.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, there are two comments I can make on that subject. First, we are making a general review of VIA operations. Two or three years after setting up the corporation the government feels the need for reflection and that will lead to discussions with specialized groups, and with hon. members of course.

Second, several weeks ago I began an exchange of views with the transport ministers of the Atlantic provinces, including Newfoundland, on a concept whereby we would make up an envelope which would enable the provinces, in conjunction with the federal government, to adopt what I feel would be a much more constructive, much more effective and much more intelligent approach to transportation in those provinces. For instance, we might end up by saving money on certain means of transportation and those savings could then be invested in other modes of transportation. It is with that background in mind that some day I would like to reply at length to the hon. member's question.

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[English]

CROWN CORPORATIONS**INQUIRY RESPECTING STATUS OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board who on several occasions has promised the House speedy action on introducing a Crown corporations bill similar to that introduced by the Conservative government in 1979. Where is that bill and why has the minister not kept that commitment?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, I am keeping that commitment.

An hon. Member: Where is the bill?

Mr. Beatty: Madam Speaker, it is nice to see that the minister has not lost his sense of humour since joining the treasury benches. My supplementary question for the President of the Treasury Board is this. He will be aware that Bill C-42, the bill to create a Crown corporation for the post office, includes a provision which would allow the Postmaster General to give secret directives to the new Crown corporation. In view of the fact that these secret directives are directly contrary to one of the central elements of the previous Crown corporations bill, namely, that secret directives would not be allowed, how is that element of the policy being changed by the President of the Treasury Board, or will it be included in his bill?

Mr. Johnston: Madam Speaker, great progress has been made in ironing out a number of difficulties of which I am sure the hon. member is aware. Constructive criticism has been received concerning the prior bill. On that specific point, the provisions of the omnibus bill will, of course, override the provisions of any other bill affecting Crown corporations. That was the intent, so the law will have to be made compatible at