

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): No, Madam Speaker. I think the accepted strength at the moment is 83,400 or 82,800. I can correct that if I am wrong, but I think it is 83,400 people. At the moment we are at full strength. There is no question of cutting the authorized strength approved by the government.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LEBANON—SAFETY OF CANADIAN CITIZENS

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. I am sure he is aware that there are Canadian citizens and other persons who would be ordinarily resident in Canada who are trapped at the moment in Lebanon. To date, Canadian representatives in Lebanon have not been able either to identify them properly or find out where they are. Would the Prime Minister consider making representations, both to the authorities in Beirut and to the authorities in Israel, asking that they assist us in identifying our citizens and residents who are in that war-torn country and in attempting to have them conducted out of the country with safe passage?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I will inquire into the matter. I understand that the Department of External Affairs has been in touch and assisting with these cases. The hon. member shakes his head no. I will inquire into it, and if there is any way in which we could help, obviously we would want to do so.

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RAILWAYS

GILSON REPORT ON CROWSNEST PASS RATES

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): Madam Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. It concerns the Gilson report. The minister has had the report for some two weeks. Obviously he and his department have studied it and his officials have communicated their feelings about the report to him. Could the minister indicate to the House whether there is any part of the report about which he has any great concern or any serious questions?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I said that I would not comment on it because obviously my colleagues want to be associated with me in the decision-making process. But there is one thing in the report which obviously comes to mind immediately. As my hon. friend remembers, in the statement of last February 8 the government had indicated some parameters, some general principles. One of those principles was that the cost for the next four years to the federal government would be at the level of \$3.2 billion. It comes out as \$3.5 billion in the Gilson report. If my hon. friend, like me, is rather skeptical about the rate of

Tabling of Documents

inflation indicated as an assumption in the report, then he might conclude that it will be more than \$3.5 billion. That is one of the difficulties.

● (1500)

Another observation which might be made is about all the predictions, about the terrible things that were to happen. We all remember our NDP friends yelling all across the west that this was going to be the downfall of western agriculture. The fact is that should the government adopt the Gilson report, or something approaching it, the increase of the cost of transportation to the farmers would be rather moderate. Should the government accept the whole thing it would be 50 per cent more than the Crow in four years' time, and after 10 years it will be 220 per cent of Crow, which is far away from what those guys had been predicting all along. This is particularly true considering what the defeated government of Saskatchewan kept announcing all through the campaign which took place there. Therefore, one now realizes the unfairness of these boogies that were built up by the NDP and its Saskatchewan wing.

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[Translation]

PETITIONS

TABLING OF REPORT OF CLERK OF PETITIONS

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has laid upon the Table reports of the Clerk of Petitions stating that he has examined the petitions presented by hon. members on Wednesday, June 23, 1982, and finds that they meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

GRAIN

TABLING OF GILSON REPORT ON GRAIN TRANSPORTATION IN WESTERN CANADA

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, with your leave, I wish to table, under the provisions of Standing Order 41(2), the Gilson Report on Western Grain Transportation—Report on Consultations and Recommendations, and in French "*Transport des grains dans l'Ouest—Rapport sur les consultations et les recommandations*".