

Oral Questions

[Translation]

INDUSTRY**INQUIRY IF GOVERNMENT WILL STOP TRANSACTION BETWEEN GULF AND ULTRAMAR**

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal-Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion. I also want to welcome him back to the House, and I hope he will be as nice to me as he was to my hon. colleague. Mr. Minister, you are aware that the Montreal East Survival Committee, the Official Opposition and the Quebec National Assembly are asking your Government to stop the transaction between Gulf and Ultramar.

Could the Minister inform the House today whether a decision was made by Cabinet this morning to advise the employees that you intend to stop the transaction between Gulf and Ultramar and allow Gaz métropolitain to buy the Montreal East refinery? Are you ready to announce that decision to the House now?

[English]

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, in response to the Hon. Member's question, he is quite correct. This is a matter which is before Investment Canada. Investment Canada is advising me. It has certain additional information which it would like to have confirmed or otherwise before it gives me final advice. As of this moment, I have not been put in a position to approve or disapprove the proposed purchase by Ultramar.

[Translation]

TIMING OF GOVERNMENT DECISION

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal-Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, the Minister is aware that a decision must be made promptly. Speed is of the essence. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has recommended that the transaction be stopped, for the sake of Quebec consumers. Could the Minister give the House the assurance that his decision will be made before tomorrow, or Monday at the latest?

[English]

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I certainly can give the Hon. Member the assurance that we intend to arrive at a decision at the earliest possible moment. I doubt if it will be this week. Hopefully, it will be early next week.

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AIR SAFETY**IMPACT OF INDUSTRY DEREGULATION—SITUATION IN UNITED STATES**

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, earlier today we heard how the Government has seen the

wisdom of reregulating the food inspection system in the country. I would like to ask the Minister of Transport a question regarding the impact of deregulation on aviation safety.

I wish to ask the Minister if he is aware that the safety record in terms of injury and damages with respect to U.S. charter aircraft is nine times worse than that with respect to flights of scheduled airlines. American industry analysts are saying that travellers would be wise to choose their charter airlines carefully. Does the Minister accept this concept of buyer beware?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, since 1979 aviation safety in this country has improved progressively, thanks to the steps which we took when we were in government in 1979.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mazankowski: I refer to the Dubin Inquiry and the legislation which flowed therefrom. As a matter of fact 1985 will probably go down as one of the best years in aviation history for Canada in terms of fewer accidents and fatalities. I think that is recognition of the fact that Canada's safety standards are high, will remain high, and will be enhanced wherever necessary.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, in light of what the Minister has just said, and since the inspection staff he has available to him is only able to inspect carriers once a year, and then for only about two hours, just in terms of performing a paper inspection, how can he say to the House that in a deregulated environment we will not have some problems? How can he say that to us?

• (1440)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there is something in excess of 600 people involved in the inspection service for all elements of the inspection. If we need more, we will certainly consider that. But I must tell the Hon. Member that the Auditor General was very critical of some of the things Transport Canada was doing with respect to air traffic control towers and services of that nature. Perhaps that report will have to be looked at with some degree of objectivity.

However, I want to assure the Hon. Member, and all Hon. Members of this House, that this Government has no intention of degrading safety. It is clearly stated in the Freedom to Move paper. The Standing Committee clearly recognized that. And wherever necessary, as we have done in the past, we will be taking measures to enhance and secure safety for the travelling public at all costs.