

Oral Questions

that facilities being provided have to be part of the cost of flying has led to a full discussion with the carriers of all the issues—

Mr. Mazankowski: That is not true.

Mr. Lang:—about what kind of facilities should be put in place. Whereas, until we were charging some of these costs through, the carriers always found it very attractive to ask for as much as possible in the way of facilities. Now that they know there is a charge to be borne, they are being very realistic indeed about what they ask for in the way of facilities, and that is a very good result for the taxpayer and the traveller.

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NATIONAL SECURITY

IGOR GOUZENKO CASE—PUBLICATION OF SECRET DOCUMENTS

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Prime Minister: it has to do with national security.

As the Prime Minister knows, under the law, secret documents are kept in custody for 30 years. Recently, it has become known that in so far as the revelations of Igor Gouzenko are concerned, they are not going to be made available at this time. Would the Prime Minister tell the House why such an alteration has been made in the general policy, and when does he expect that these revelations, which were so beneficial to our country and would no longer be detrimental by revelation, will be revealed to Canadians as a whole?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the former prime minister will recall that I took the initiative a few years ago, myself, to reduce the 50-year rule to a 30-year rule, at which time I consulted with the right hon. gentleman and obtained his agreement.

It is a matter of policy to shorten the time interval as this government has done. If there is some exception, I am not aware of it; but I will take note of the question and find out why there has been an exception.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I realize what the Prime Minister has done: I thought it was worth-while and I approved of it. However, there has been an exception made in Gouzenko's case and some people in this country are very frightened at the revelations which might be made, for they were not proceeded against as others were who were no more guilty than these people. Therefore, it is necessary that at the earliest date this information be made available.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the hon. gentleman has repeated his previous question and I can only give the same answer, that I will inquire if an exception has been made and, if so, why. Presumably, if it has been made, it would have been in the interests of national security.

Mr. Diefenbaker: There is no national security in that.

[Mr. Lang.]

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. gentleman knows that there is no national security involved. I wonder how he knows that. The files were not accessible to him at that time.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

INCREASE IN CAPITAL BUDGET OF DEPARTMENT

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. On Tuesday, he told his press conference that the government was adhering to its commitment to increase the capital budget of the Department of National Defence by 12 per cent per year, in real terms, and its operating budget to keep pace with inflation.

Can the Prime Minister clarify those remarks, as senior DND officials, particularly the associate deputy minister of finance in the department, acknowledged at the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence on March 21 that the real increase in the capital budget for this fiscal year is only 2.8 per cent?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would have to refer to that testimony and see in what context it was made. Probably it was talking about a particular point in time, but the commitment on the forward budgeting over the period, I believe, until 1981 has been for a 12 per cent increase per year in capital budgets and in real terms.

It is possible that in expending the money the department will want to spend more than 12 per cent in one year and a little less in the next. Certainly, the commitment still stands and I would be very surprised if the hon. member could find any evidence to the contrary.

Mr. McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn to the Minister of National Defence for my supplementary question.

On Tuesday, he too referred to a theoretical capital envelope. Is this not really a subterfuge that means the government has taken some of the department's money out of this year's budget and is replacing it with an IOU possibly payable in some not yet specified year? Does the minister agree that the so-called financial envelope is a euphemism meaning, "Sorry, DND: we are breaking our financial promises this year, but we will give you a similar promise for some other year"?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, maybe it is unparliamentary, but that is absolute nonsense. The hon. member asks this sort of question in committee and in the House all the time. He knows the answer to it. The Prime Minister just gave the answer to it.

The capital envelope is not a fictitious thing; it is a very tough constraint in my department, as it is in all departments, but it is very real. Nevertheless, those expenditures are committed by the government, or will be if some are not already, and that equipment will be purchased. I think the hon.