

Oral Questions

Will the minister at least have the decency in this House to admit some responsibility for what happened in the Dryden accident?

[English]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Justice Moshansky says in his statement today:

“Rarely are aviation accidents the result of a single cause. Modern air transportation is a complex enterprise. Similarly complex are the causes of aircraft accidents. This was certainly the case with the crash of the Air Ontario F-28 jet at Dryden”.

He has made 191 recommendations. We have already started to act on 49 per cent of those recommendations. I have put in place an implementation team to make sure we have all the recommendations adhered to within the next six months.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Deputy Prime Minister.

The facts from the government's own department and agencies clearly demonstrate that the government's deregulation policy has compromised air safety.

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister, given the dramatic increase of aircraft movements following deregulation and the fact that the number of near-misses over airports since 1985 have increased over 300 per cent, why did this government freeze the number of air traffic controllers in 1985, resulting in 400 fewer controllers than are needed today to establish bare minimum safety levels? What kind of safety standards and safety planning is that?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transport has had a program in existence for three years to increase the number of air traffic controllers to cope with the increase in traffic that we have experienced over the last three years.

By the beginning of 1994 we will have in place the full number of air traffic controllers needed so that the present air controllers will have less overtime.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the same minister. Deregulation resulted in more aircraft movements carrying more passengers at virtually every Canadian airport.

I ask the minister why it is that his director of air safety and standards division today confirmed for me that there are only 31 commercial aircraft inspectors in operation for the entire country today, when a secret document from the Department of Transport three years ago, for that period suggested that they at least needed 44 inspectors, never mind the needs of today.

When is this minister and this government going to place public safety before Conservative ideology?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear the member mention all these increases in the number of passengers and aircraft.

I can say that there were 3.677 million hours of flying in Canada last year, 5 million movements and 66 million emplanements and disembarkments. This indicates that deregulation has worked well for the public. It is further enhanced by the fact that we have a 35 per cent decrease in the number of accidents over that same period.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, first of all it is very clear from the minister's failure to respond to this report that he has no option but to resign. However, my question has to do with another report which was filed today. My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

• (1440)

The Citizens' Inquiry into Peace and Security has published its report today. The report comes after hundreds of presentations from people all across Canada from all walks of life. It calls for a complete transformation of international and foreign policy for this country.

Will the government respond to what is being described as a tremendous desire on the part of the Canadian people to at least play a part in formulating Canada's policy in this area and establish a full public comprehensive study of foreign and defence policy in Canada?