

Oral Questions

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGESGOVERNMENT PLANS TO DEAL WITH FAILURES LISTED BY
COMMISSIONER

Mr. Bill Clarke (Vancouver Quadra): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In his annual report, the Commissioner of Official Languages states, and I would like to quote these two sentences:

—it is clear that in staking so much time and effort on the constitutional card, the Government not only produced a negative reaction in some quarters but effectively missed out on other opportunities for advancing minority rights. Indeed rather than using the occasion to lead by example and to work with the provinces to improve programs and services vital to the minorities, the federal government may have succeeded instead in diverting attention from much needed reforms.

My question is as follows: could the Prime Minister tell the House what he intends to do about the disturbing failures which the Commissioner of Official Languages pointed out in his report?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I think that could be discussed in the appropriate committee, and I understand that our House Leader will move, on motions, that the report be referred to that committee. There are many things to be said about the report, and they will be said before the committee. But for the time being I find it surprising that hon. members should ask us our position with regard to this charge that we have not done enough to protect minorities. The charter contains all kinds of provisions to protect language minorities, to name only those. But I am happy to state now that, with the consent of the opposition, the next step could be to try to get Ontario to comply with section 133. I do hope that we will have unanimity in the House when the time comes to press for that.

Mr. Clarke: Madam Speaker, I am a member of the committee to which the Prime Minister referred. Does the Prime Minister intend to shelve this report next to the Pepin-Robarts Commission report?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I am very happy to see this renewed interest on the opposition's part in discussing matters related to the Official Languages Act. As I just said, in about five minutes we will move that this report be referred to the joint committee. I am delighted to know ahead of time that we can count on the active and positive co-operation of the official opposition with a view to improving the official languages situation in this country.

AIRPORTSGOVERNMENT INTENTIONS RESPECTING APPLICATION OF NEW
FUEL COSTS POLICY

Mr. Robert Gourd (Argenteuil-Papineau): Madam Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Following statements by an official of the Department of Transport to the effect that Mirabel airport seems clearly disadvantaged with regard to fuel costs they charged to carriers compared to carriers using Toronto and western airports, can the minister tell the House whether he intends to implement a new policy on fuel costs designed to favour Canada as a whole without for all that putting the largest airport in North America, namely Mirabel, at a disadvantage?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, in his October 28 budget, the Minister of Finance indicated to the House that he intended to implement a tax on fuel used by all aircraft on international flights. This would put all Canadian airports on the same footing with regard to international flights. Within five minutes or so, I intend to table a ways and means motion designed to implement the decision announced by the Minister of Finance in his budget speech. This should deal fully with the problems raised by the hon. member and put Mirabel on exactly the same footing as any other airport in Canada. In fact, Mirabel was not the only airport concerned but all eastern airports were in the same situation which is somewhat different from that of airports west of Toronto.

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[English]

PETRO-CANADA

METHOD OF FINANCING ACQUISITION OF PETROFINA

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It has been widely reported that the minister intends to implement a tax on gasoline in order to pay for the takeover of Petrofina. I would like to know why the Minister would choose to use that particular measure, given that it can only add to the already difficult to cope with inflationary spiral, given that it would add to the price of every single consumer product in Canada, given that it will add to the cost of transportation for every Canadian, instead of—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Flip-flop.

Madam Speaker: It would be helpful if the hon. member would not make a speech, but would just ask a question.