

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister may like to think that he is protecting the defence and environment ministers from the inevitable backlash. However that will not happen. These Order in Council appointments were made by the Governor in Council, meaning the cabinet.

The defence and environment ministers are part of that cabinet. They said yes to patronage for Tory flacks, hacks and bagmen. However on election day Canadians will be saying a loud no to them.

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[Translation]

NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Laval—Est): Madam Speaker, from May 31 to June 6, Canadians all across the country will celebrate National Access Awareness Week, which promotes a fundamental value of our society: equal opportunity for all citizens. Based on community participation and partnership among the disabled and various sectors of activity, this national week is meant to be a special opportunity to emphasize the active participation of the disabled in the life of our society.

In Canada, tangible progress has been made in the quality of life and social and economic integration of the disabled, but much still remains to be done. Today I call upon my colleagues to take an active part in National Access Awareness Week and thus to promote the full and complete integration of the disabled in Canadian society. Access is more than a wish; it is a right for 4.2 million disabled Canadians.

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[English]

SHOWBOAT

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Madam Speaker, the musical *Showboat* is a period piece which depicts blacks in the minstrel show tradition.

A new, supposedly updated, production in North York has evoked heated controversy and division among black and Jewish communities in spite of claims that Afro-Canadians' sensitivities are being addressed.

In Toronto to deliver a lecture named after Garth Drabinsky, the show's producer, William F. Buckley entered the dispute. He said that Jews have a right to be sensitive because of the Holocaust, and he is right. But according to him blacks who suffered over 200 years of

slavery, 25 million dead in the Atlantic crossing, 100 years of second class citizenship, lynchings and showboat stereotypes are described as preposterous to express their sensitivity.

• (1415)

What could be more destructive to an historic alliance between two communities, both of which have suffered, than this racist trivialization of the sufferings of one by comparison to the other?

If the voices of the Buckleyes are the price for *Showboat*, Mr. Drabinsky, it is not worth it.

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DIRECT AIR LINKS

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Madam Speaker, in the nation's capital we have the Ottawa Lynx baseball club, the Ottawa Senators hockey club, an advanced technology sector and many industries with a large market to the south. Yet we have a government and a transportation minister that are incapable of approving a direct air link from Ottawa to the American market, and in particular, Pittsburgh and Chicago.

Ottawa was the only city in Canada excluded from the original Canada-U.S. air treaty in 1974. As someone said recently, the Minister of Transport should crawl out from under this desk.

Yesterday we heard this same minister has awarded direct air service from his hometown to Pittsburgh. I say shame on him.

The lack of air links is costing the Ottawa region \$500 million annually. People from Ottawa and its environs have no choice but to throw this government and this minister out of office in the next election.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

TRADE

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister. This morning in Washington, the Prime Minister met President Clinton and, after lunch, the Prime Minister said that he did not agree with the President of the