

Oral Questions

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there was a task force report which I referred to here last week and which was acted upon. There were nine major improvements instituted as a result of that report. I outlined to the House how in excess of \$60 million in additional funds have been spent improving airport security. Last September we instituted a screening procedure with respect to security areas in airports. All of this, of course, met with the opposition of the NDP and the unions they represent who have been kicking and screaming all the way.

With respect to the question of whether or not we are prepared to take over the screening of passengers at airports, as the hon. gentleman knows, I have summoned the presidents of the major airlines to meet with me to review that situation and see what they are prepared to do to improve the service. The Hon. Member's suggestion is a possibility or option which is being considered.

LIABILITY INSURANCE NEEDED BY SECURITY FORMS

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for his answer.

The task force report also identified as a major concern the problem of liability insurance for security companies. Since that time, Pinkerton's, the biggest security agency in the world, and Burns, have withdrawn from airport security.

Can the Minister confirm for the House and Canadians generally the fact that, as a result of the near impossibility of getting adequate liability insurance in the wake of the Air-India disaster, if another disaster were to occur today those companies still engaged in airport security work would be forced to declare bankruptcy because they do not have the liability insurance they require, and those who suffer injury or loss of life would be unable to seek financial redress under this system? Can the Minister confirm that?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to confirm some hoked up, hypothetical question about what might happen if there were another disaster, God forbid, of the Air-India type, and what would happen to the insurance requirements of certain unnamed firms—

Mr. Tobin: They do not have insurance.

Mr. Crosbie:—or whether they have insurance or not.

Mr. Tobin: They have to have insurance.

Mr. Crosbie: This is one of the silliest questions I have heard. I cannot be expected to take this question seriously. If the hon. gentleman was serious he might have given notice so that the matter could be looked into first, instead of continuing with his attempt at sensationalism, which is contrary to the interests of the industry.

NATIONAL REVENUE

NORTHERN TAX BENEFITS—FEDERAL CIVIL SERVANTS—DELAY IN RECEIVING T4 SLIPS

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. As he knows, the northern tax benefits for housing and travel are extremely important to northerners to offset their high cost of living. However, I can tell him that the number of pot-holes in the administration of this program are as large as those on the Alaska Highway.

Northern benefits guides and forms were not even out until late February. Now, contrary to Section 205 and Section 209 of the Income Tax Act, northern federal civil servants have not received their correct T4 slips as required by the end of February. If the Government cannot follow its own rules, how can taxpayers do so?

What is the Government doing to ensure that northerners all across Canada get the corrected T4 slips?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member raises a very timely question. The answer is as follows.

In this case she is referring mostly to Treasury Board since we are talking about federal civil servants. If there are errors or omissions in the T4 slips, then every employer has the responsibility to amend them and notify all concerned, particularly the employees in our Department, as soon as possible. I have had a word with my colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister. We are aware of the problem and we are going to see what we can do to correct it.

INCOME TAX RETURNS—REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF FILING DEADLINE

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister extend the date for filing returns for these people if they do not receive the T4 slips immediately? In that way they will not be penalized and will not have to pay interest if they owe money and file late. As well, those expecting a refund will get interest because they have not been able to file at the proper time. If so, when will this be done?

● (1440)

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, it is the policy of our Department that if the Government contributes to the difficulty of a taxpayer we make redress.