

of restraint, whether he thinks the cost involved in training and implementation is worth while?

Mr. Lang: Again, the hon. member is awfully nervous about a statement which simply indicated that I would not close the door on the extension of service to a particular location. I would think members opposite would rather fall back on what has been the traditional position of their party, which is to support reasonable steps for the provision of bilingual services in this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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AIR TRANSPORT

POSSIBILITY OF DANGEROUS CONDITION IN QUEBEC AS RESULT OF LACK OF BILINGUAL AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock): In view of the minister's statement this morning that the implementation of bilingual air traffic control is in the interests of safety, is he suggesting that there are some bad flying conditions in the province of Quebec now because we do not have bilingual air traffic controllers and pilots there are not sufficiently adept in the language?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): By extending the use of French as a permissible control language for flight operations at five airports initially in the province of Quebec, we met the greatest part of the problem which was to deal with those pilots whose comprehension is much better in the French language than it is in English and we are therefore making it possible for them to communicate with air traffic control in that language to enhance safety. The existence of that facility in the French language at those airports has increased quite remarkably the number of pilots, whose normal language is French, flying into those airports, which demonstrates the purpose that is being served by accommodating pilots in this fashion.

We are therefore doing something which makes sense. We are doing it with safety in mind. We do not have the same immediate problem with IFR flights because it is a fact that almost any pilot with an IFR licence will also have an English capability and will therefore be able to fly beyond the immediate region of his province.

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● (1430)

PUBLIC SERVICE

INQUIRY WHETHER AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS INCLUDED IN ESTIMATE OF BILINGUAL POSITIONS

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock): Mr. Speaker, may I put a final supplementary question to the President of the Treasury Board. May I ask the President of the Treasury Board whether the air traffic controllers, who are now supposed to be bilingual, were included in the estimate of 52,000 positions that the President of the Treasury Board announced a year ago?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, I missed the question because I was caught between two lines.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the President of the Treasury Board whether the air traffic controllers who are now deemed to be bilingual, or need to be bilingual, were part of the 52,000 positions allocated last year as needing to be bilingual positions?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I am not in a position to give a precise answer to the hon. member on that subject, but I shall answer him tomorrow, because of course I do not have those figures with me.

SMALL NUMBER OF INFORMATION CANADA EMPLOYEES FINDING EMPLOYMENT—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I shall take this opportunity to answer the question asked yesterday by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton concerning the employees of Information Canada. Contrary to the information he gave the House yesterday, I can say that until now we have relocated 216 out of 301 persons. So, instead of 20 per cent, it is almost 70 per cent of the employees who have other positions.

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[English]

TRADE

INCREASE IN DEFICIT—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO CORRECT

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. As Statistics Canada stated on Friday that Canada's merchandise trade deficit increased sharply in January to \$309 million from \$91 million in December, with imports rising at two and a half times the rate of the increase in exports, following a year in which the total deficit was \$800 million, does the Prime Minister believe that the Canadian business community should derive the same satisfaction from these alarming trade figures as he said on Friday they should derive from the fact that the index of industrial production took a sharp drop in December, following a total year's reduction of 5 per cent in the index?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Oh no, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Chrétien: Try again, George.

Mr. Hees: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. As usual the Prime Minister has not taken the trouble to read the Statistics Canada report on a matter so important as a drastic trade deficit which is going to cost the country a great deal indeed and cause great internal trouble in the country. May I ask the Prime Minister, what is the government's plan to try to straighten out this very serious trade deficit and to put the country back on a sound trading basis?