

Could the Minister inform the House whether he has received an official request from the Province of Quebec under the program for financial assistance in case of natural disasters, and whether the Government of Canada intends to intervene in this case by making contributions on humanitarian grounds?

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, our program for providing financial assistance in case of natural disasters applies only when a request has been made by the province concerned. In this particular case, I have not yet received a request from the Province of Quebec, but if I do, I can assure the Hon. Member that it will be given very serious consideration.

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[English]

AIR TRANSPORT

AIRCRAFT TIRE INSPECTIONS AND RUNWAY MAINTENANCE

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport. The CTV program W-5, aired last Sunday, revealed that Transport Canada's safety standards with respect to aircraft tire inspections and the cleaning of runways of rubber contamination were below acceptable safety standards. Has the Minister discussed this with his officials and, if so, what action is he going to take? Second, is he satisfied with the answers that were given by Transport Canada officials, since it appears that the officials were confused both about the standards that were in place in Transport Canada and the method in which they were being applied?

● (1500)

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have had some interesting discussions with officials concerning the findings brought forward during the program. As in many cases, I think there are differing points of view on what is an applicable standard. I think particularly of the case of the testing of retread tires on airplanes. There are very effective methods of doing this. We have met with the airlines to determine that their present methods give a strong guarantee of safety in this area. I would point out to the Hon. Member that I hope to be in a position within the next day or two to make a public announcement about the results of the discussions that we have had. I hope he can contain his anxiety and interest until that time, and then we can have a good discussion about the matter.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I think it would be important that the Minister make a clear statement in order to remove any doubts.

Oral Questions

HAZARD POSED BY AIRPORT RAVINE

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, the program also pointed out that the accident which was referred to that took place in June, 1978, at the end of runway 24L, could have been avoided if the ravine had been removed, or at least sloped. It is the considered opinion of those engaged in the aviation industry that this represents a hazard wherein an accident is about to happen at any time. Could the Minister explain why, after five and a half years, no action or no plan of repair is being contemplated, either for the removal of the ravine or at least for the sloping of it, which would remove that hazardous situation?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am tempted to respond to the Hon. Member for Vegreville by asking why he did not do it when he was Minister of Transport.

Mr. Mazankowski: You were impatient.

Mr. Axworthy: The fact of the matter is that the particular condition of the runway is one that meets all international standards set out by ICAO. It is a fully equipped and full length runway. If we were to extend construction out over the ravine it would obviously have very major and environmental impacts in that area. However, we are looking at those aspects of the matter and, as I said to the Hon. Member, from the discussions I have had I will be in a position to make some response to this within the next day or two.

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OLYMPIC GAMES

SELECTION OF ALPINE SPORTS TEAMS

Mr. Robert Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport. In the view of many Canadians it is an absolute disgrace that many fine young Canadians, who have worked many hours, many months, and many years, to achieve the international olympic standards, have succeeded, and then have been turned down by the COA. Will the Minister tell the House that the three alpine and the three cross-country skiers who met these standards and were not selected for the teams will in fact be selected, and that he will encourage them to do so?

[Translation]

Hon. Jacques Olivier (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the House that we share exactly the concerns as were voiced by the Hon. Member and that we plan to tell the National Olympic Committee and the Canadian Olympic Association that we cannot understand either why there will not be greater participation of our young amateur athletes to provide them with some experience seeing we shall be hosting the games in 1988. The provincial and federal Governments have been very actively involved