

Oral Questions

remaining relative in the old country who may not be in the immediate family class for immigration, but who, by long association, is dependent on a Canadian family for physical or mental well-being. Since the Minister has announced that he is cutting back on immigration next year by about 15,000 in spite of the clear signs of recovery in unemployment, will the Minister assure this House that he will continue to exercise his discretion on compassionate grounds on behalf of such remaining family members?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I believe I should say, first of all, that the Hon. Member is not technically correct when he says that I will be cutting down. The figures which we have announced are not the targets which will be inevitably reached, but are the estimated entry levels which we expect will take place. We believe that the entry next year will turn out to be about the same as it will prove to be this year, because I expect entry this year will be below what we had originally anticipated.

Of course there is no intention, Mr. Speaker, of changing the practice or the power which does exist to exercise consideration on humanitarian grounds. I am always prepared to examine individual cases which are presented to me by Hon. Members, to see if they are worthy of the exercise of that discretion.

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PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**METHOD OF PRESENTATION—AUDITOR GENERAL'S RESERVATIONS**

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance my question is directed to the Minister of State for Finance. The Minister will know that the Minister of Finance has presented the Public Accounts of Canada to the Governor General about which the Auditor General has expressed serious reservations. Essentially what the Auditor General has said—and the Minister will appreciate this—is that there has been a netting out of expenses and receipts so that the expenses and receipts of the Government are grossly understated. Will the Minister change the system of reporting in future so that we will have what the Auditor General says is a reasonable, clean statement? We will then not have reservations by Parliament's auditor as to the way the accounts of Canada are presented.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, each year the Auditor General gives his comments on the Public Accounts to which the Hon. Member opposite has referred. As in previous years, we shall take full account of his proposals with respect to the way in which the Accounts are presented. The fact remains, however, that the presentation of the Public Accounts conformed with past practices and, if there are improvements to be made, as suggested by the Auditor General, we shall take those into account.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF HON. THOMAS WELLS, ONTARIO
MINISTER OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I would like to call to the attention of the House the presence in our gallery of the Hon. Thomas Wells, Ontario Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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INDUSTRY**BOMBARDIER TRAIN CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT**

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. The Minister is now the proud owner of two slightly used train sets which were repurchased by the Government for some \$9 million after Amtrak Corporation in the United States refused to buy the trains from Bombardier MLW under the terms of a lease-purchase agreement. When the Government entered into this contract with the Bombardier Company, to whom did the Government intend to resell the trains if it was called on to buy them? Or was the Government simply rolling the dice, hoping it would never have to perform on the contract?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I thought the Hon. Member was going to rise and ask me some questions with respect to Pratt & Whitney, so that I would have a chance to answer him directly in the House instead of doing this all by himself. With respect—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Would the Minister answer the question please?

Mr. Lumley: With respect to the question concerning the LRC matter, I wasn't around when those decisions were made. I believe I would make the same arrangement tomorrow as whomever made the decision at that time. The fact of the matter is that there was a potential of hundreds of millions of dollars of export business for Canada, as well as thousands of high technology jobs with a future by entering into that contract. It did not work out, Mr. Speaker. However, I concur in the decision to take the risk.

Mr. Wilson: This proves again that there is no foresight, no planning, and no understanding of how the taxpayers' funds are to be looked after. It is another example of government waste.

NON-USE OF TRAINS

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I will ask the Minister directly if he will explain why he has allowed these trains to sit in the yard by Bombardier's plant since the spring of 1982 when, at the same time the repurchase