

the time, was "No". I want to rectify that, Mr. Speaker, by saying "Yes, we do". We did it even before 1972 and we continue to do it, benefitting taxpayers by collecting the money which rightfully belongs to the treasury, because that is all we are, collectors, and we should collect the money and we should do it.

Mr. Beatty: The minister has asked me to cite specific instances where chartered accountants have said they were able to get this information over the telephone. Is the minister aware of an interview which took place on the "As It Happens" program on the CBC on November 18 of this year with Mr. David Ingram, a tax consultant in Vancouver with CEN-TA Tax Services, who indicated in the interview that it has been a long standing practice in the minister's department to give this information out over the telephone. Mr. Ingram indicated that he had had this information himself over the telephone, and so had his officials for a long period. He also indicated that the security practices in the minister's department have been totally inadequate for years, and that although Mr. Ingram has raised the matter publicly before nothing has been done about it. Why is the minister not aware of that broadcast interview with an individual saying that he had been able to get this information?

● (1117)

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for giving me a name; I will certainly look into the matter. I do hope that it will be better than the other name of Thompson which he gave me before, regarding which I indicated by letter that what the hon. member said was not true. However, I am willing to look into this case and I will give the hon. member an answer shortly.

As for whether I listened to the program, no. I was too busy in my office until about 11.30 at night to look at any program. Perhaps I should look at a program once in a while.

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AIR TRANSPORT

REQUEST FOR INQUIRY INTO FAILURE TO ENFORCE SAFETY REGULATIONS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Transport I should like to put a question to the Acting Prime Minister. In view of the fact that the Minister of Transport has had in his hands for a number of days now a report on the dangerous state of aviation safety in northwestern Ontario and that subsequent revelations have disclosed that top officials in Ottawa have blocked attempts by regional officers to enforce safety standards, will the Acting Prime Minister inform the House that his government is prepared to institute a full public inquiry into this matter so that we can find out why safety regulations have been disobeyed?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Acting Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport indicated before the com-

Oral Questions

mittee, first of all, that the message which went out from the Ottawa office was not at his request. He did not agree with that particular approach. He felt that a decision should not be taken arbitrarily but that both sides of the issue should be looked at before a licence was in fact taken. I would commend to the hon. member the minister's answer to the committee. In addition to that, the department is in fact studying the report and will make its appropriate decision after it has studied the report.

Mr. Symes: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Notwithstanding what the acting minister has said I would put a further question. In view of the revelation that one of the criteria regional aircraft inspectors were to consider in suspending a licence, to quote the memo, was "the possibility of embarrassment to the minister and any other potential political implications", does the minister not consider that statement alone sufficient grounds for a public inquiry? Surely the minister does not believe that political expediency takes precedence over public safety?

Mr. Cullen: Very definitely not, Mr. Speaker, and that is precisely what the Minister of Transport said in the committee. He did not authorize the message to be sent. He did not agree with the conclusions reached by the individual who sent that particular message, and he spelt out very, very clearly that the report would be studied most carefully and any appropriate action taken, be it an inquiry or simply a tightening up in some areas.

Mr. Symes: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I still have not had an answer regarding the public inquiry, a question which I have asked twice. We cannot get to the bottom of who is responsible for issuing such orders and what the results have been. Again I ask the minister, can we expect a full public inquiry so that we can get to the bottom of this and the travelling public in northwestern Ontario can be protected? It is not good enough to say that some procedures will be tightened up. Obviously for too long something wrong has been happening, and we deserve to know who gave the orders and to clean up this mess.

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I simply mentioned that as an alternative. Again I would commend to the hon. member a careful reading of the Minister of Transport's answers before the committee, when he said that the report would be studied and the appropriate action taken, be it a public inquiry, the tightening up of regulations, or whatever action seemed appropriate. It seems to me that the study, which is an excellent study, should be looked into before conclusions are reached.