

Oral Questions

An Hon. Member: Ask it.

Mr. Gauthier: To a bunch of simple people like you. Does the Prime Minister not believe that by naming Dalton Camp he has politicized the Public Service of Canada in a partisan manner? That is the question.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think that if my hon. friend asks Michael Kirby, he would say no.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT APPOINTMENT OF DALTON CAMP BE REVIEWED
BY PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Concerning Dalton Camp, I feel, Mr. Prime Minister, that you have politicized in a partisan fashion a major issue, namely, the civil servants' political activity. This whole issue of politicizing the Public Service could cause tremendous problems. Will you give your word that this appointment will be reviewed by a parliamentary committee—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please! The preamble is too long.

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[English]

VIA RAIL

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport for the first time, in his first time.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An Hon. Member: You only have four minutes, Les.

Mr. Benjamin: In light of the rail passenger action force report which was made available to the public by Transport 2000 and which makes several serious allegations about the management of VIA Rail as well as several serious recommendations, will the Minister state what action he has been taking on the recommendations of that task force and what is being done about the orders for new railway cars?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, if it takes me as long to answer, we will be here until tomorrow evening. I want to thank the hon. gentleman for his question. He is a well known transport critic.

The matter of VIA Rail is now under consideration by the Government in all aspects that have not yet been dealt with. Many of these aspects have been dealt with by my predecessor who, as the hon. gentleman knows, put rail passenger transportation legislation before the House. It will be reintroduced with some changes and improvements, hopefully later this fall. I can

assure the hon. gentleman that I have the interests of VIA Rail and the rail passengers very much at heart and I will act as quickly as I can. Matters will be coming before the House before Christmas.

ORDER FOR NEW PASSENGER CARS

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, what the heck happened to the order for new rail passenger cars which his predecessor announced twice this year and four other predecessors announced annually? What happened to that order for 130 new rail passenger cars?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I hope to have the privilege of announcing the same matter myself.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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● (1500)

[Translation]

RAILWAYS

REQUEST THAT STUDY BE TABLED

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): As it happens, Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the farcical Minister of Transport.

Last week, when I asked him to table the CN internal study to justify shifting railway car and locomotive maintenance work from the Pointe-Saint-Charles shops to some other place in Canada, the Minister replied that my question was jejune and juvenile. May I give him a further opportunity to shed more light on the reasons which prompt the Government to undertake such serious changes, or does he expect the 2,000 workers whose jobs are at stake to take such juvenile answers for facts?

[English]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the position is that this is not a decision taken by the Government. The Government has appointed a board of directors for Canadian National, and also top flight management. Its responsibility, laid down for it first in 1978, is to operate the railway without any financial assistance from the Government of Canada. In doing that, it conducted an internal study in 1985 of its repair shop requirements. As a result of that study, CN decided, as you know, Mr. Speaker, to close the Moncton shops and concentrate all heavy repairs of CN equipment at the Transcona shops in Winnipeg and turn the Pointe-Saint-Charles shops in Montreal into a contract facility. That is its decision. That is what it is in the process of doing.