

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member will appreciate that the current rules on the use of language in connection with air travel in the province of Quebec are subject to consideration by a commission. Tomorrow I will table an interim report. The situation in relation to Mirabel airport continues to be that only English is permitted in both VFR and IFR operations. Consideration is being given to the whole question of the future of the VFR flights in Mirabel. We have a study which indicates the wisdom of not allowing the landing and take-off of VFR flights at that airport in order that it be promoted as an ideal international airport for major aircraft. We have indicated those conclusions to the various interested associations and have requested their response. At this time that is only in relation to our indication that we would like to stop the landing and take-off of VFR flights at Mirabel. At the present time that is only done in English.

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PUBLIC WORKS

COST OF MOVING DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, TRADE AND COMMERCE TO NEW QUARTERS—REASON FOR ERECTING NEW BUILDING

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, may I put a question to the Minister of Public Works regarding the move of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce which his department is coordinating. The cost of moving this one small department a few yards down Sparks Street will be some \$3.8 million, equivalent to the cost of hiring 300 movers for an entire year. The official reason for the cost is given as "coordination". God only knows what the cost would be if there were no coordination. Can the minister explain how it is possible for such a small move to cost so much, and is he prepared to tell the House what the full cost of moving 15,000 civil servants to Hull will be?

Hon. Judd Buchanan (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, it sounds as if the move were rather uncoordinated. I will have to check and get that information for the hon. member.

● (1500)

Mr. Darling: The new building into which Industry, Trade and Commerce will move is going to cost some \$50 million. I would ask the Minister why the government built a new complex for occupancy in downtown Ottawa at the same precise time that four million square feet of office space will become vacant in downtown Ottawa? Is Public Works so incapable of planning the long range space requirements of government departments that it will build even when construction is not necessary?

Mr. Buchanan: That is blatant nonsense. The move was announced by one of my predecessors eight years ago. The intention of the government was to build these buildings, to

[Mr. Joyal.]

occupy their own buildings and diminish the amount of rented space, thus getting into a better balanced position in the National Capital region. That is the policy which has been pursued and which is being carried out.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I gave you notice of my intention to raise a question of privilege and I am now doing so. On June 20, replying to a question from the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) who raised the issue of the accountability of the RCMP to the government authority, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said that it was an important and serious question and that it was causing the government concern. He went on to say he was discussing this precise matter with the Solicitor General (Mr. Fox). Two days later, on June 22, the Prime Minister indicated he still believed that the Montreal break-in was "an aberration, an incident and an isolated one". He then said: "I cannot say the question of accountability has been completely settled to the satisfaction of the government."

I have cited these references to show there has been on the part of the government itself a clearly expressed concern, at least in general terms, about the issue of governmental authority being clearly established over the operations of the RCMP.

I bring to your attention the following additional information. On June 15, 1976 the parliamentary secretary to the then solicitor general reported to the House that an "investigation" had just been completed into the 1972 break-in. It is evident now that either the investigation referred to was completely superficial, as we have reason to believe was the case, or that there was some kind of cover-up by either the RCMP or the government or by both. In any case political accountability is a central aspect of the recent allegations and convictions involving wrongdoing by the RCMP which have led to the government's decision to establish a Royal Commission to look into the matter. Unfortunately, though, it is a Commission which must ignore completely, under its terms of reference, the accountability issue which the Prime Minister and other members of the cabinet have regarded as being so central to this case.

Finally, as another illustration—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member has given ample illustrations. I am waiting for something which bears on the question of privilege.

Mr. Broadbent: I shall come to that, Your Honour. I was about to cite the contradiction between statements offered by the present Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Goyer) and by the then Commissioner of the RCMP, Mr. Higgitt as to the degree of knowledge possessed by the then solicitor general at the time of the break-in in 1972.

I submit if we are to exercise our responsibility as members of parliament in this most serious matter involving allegations and convictions for criminal wrongdoing against the RCMP and, in particular, suggestions of political incompetence, and perhaps more than that, in the exercise of political responsibility for the RCMP, we should require not only that the Royal