

Oral Questions

deliver the good news to his constituents in Elk Island this afternoon or this weekend. [English]

* * *

DRYDEN INQUIRY

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Canadians have been watching with interest as the drama around the Dryden inquiry has unfolded during its first phase.

News reports now have it that Justice Moshansky is recommending that the Government of Canada revise its regulations on de-icing of commercial airplanes to make de-icing mandatory rather than being left to the discretion of the pilot who may be subject to undue pressure to be on time in order to keep the company schedule.

Does the minister agree with this proposal and, if so, when will these regulations come into effect?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Justice Moshansky has not yet tabled his report, and I have not received a copy. When it will be done, I will consider the report and make it public. It is not a fact yet.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, the minister should be aware, as most of us commute to Ottawa by plane are, that we are well into the icing season.

Regardless of whether or not he has received that recommendation specifically from the justice involved, will he take immediate steps to implement the concept of the recommendation and ensure that de-icing is mandatory, not something that is left to the whim of the pilot?

[Translation]

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, as I said before, when the report is tabled by Judge Moshansky and I receive the report, I will consider its recommendations, and as the government usually does in a case like this, we will act on those recommendations, and of course we cannot do so until we receive the report.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Transport. Today, mayors of the Quebec-Windsor corridor representing some 14 million Canadians who have shown that they want, need and use VIA Rail, appeared before the transportation committee. They told us that VIA Rail is part of the solution, not part of the problem to the transportation needs of this country.

If the minister does not wish to eliminate passenger rail service in this country, and if he does not want the public to see his Royal Commission on Transportation as simply performing an autopsy on VIA, will the minister cede to the mayors' common-sense request for an immediate moratorium on all cuts to VIA Rail until such time as the royal commission has presented its findings?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I met the mayors just before Question Period and it was interesting. They had three proposals. The first was to consider if the decision is made what we would do with the equipment. I said I would consider their proposal. The second was to deal with the royal commission and to have a voice at the royal commission and I gave the same answer. The third one was the moratorium. The moratorium represents \$200 million and I told the mayors that I don't have that money.

Mr. Fontana: Mr. Speaker, today we have been given reports that at this very moment VIA is preparing to sell off one-third of its passenger car fleet, some 260 cars. I am wondering how the minister can stand idly by and watch VIA rolling stock and the Canadian taxpayers' investment being squandered away.

Will the minister call upon VIA Rail to stop committing slow suicide today, and not sell off its cars until we know for sure whether or not we will need them?

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, if my friend would well understand what I said before, I said that it was one of the proposals made by the mayors. I said that I would get in touch with VIA Rail to see exactly where it