

Oral Questions

containing 191 recommendations. Forty-nine per cent of these recommendations are already under way.

When Justice Moshansky tabled two interim reports earlier, action was taken on these recommendations immediately, and the safety record has been excellent because we have reduced the number of accidents in Canadian skies over the past 10 years.

The indication that Justice Moshansky himself has given is that he has confidence in the safety standards of aviation in Canada. Upon being questioned by a member of the press this morning, he reiterated that he himself has no qualms about travelling with air carriers in Canadian skies.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, in the words of Justice Moshansky, this accident did not happen by chance, it was allowed to happen. It could have been avoided.

As far back as 1985, the Nielsen task force report advised this government to "immediately increase the resources devoted to licensing, certification and enforcement in the regulation of air safety". Increase them.

Why did the government choose to ignore that advice, actually decrease resources and thereby jeopardize safety in the name of economic policy?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to mention that I informed the public this morning that I have no problems with the 191 recommendations contained in the report of Mr. Justice Moshansky.

I have also indicated that if this report was a decision of the court, I would have immediately asked our lawyers to file an appeal. I strenuously reject and object to the language that has been used that tends to put the blame on the thousands of men and women who have been, and still are active in Transport Canada and in the employment of air carriers.

To connote that these people may have allowed an accident to happen is sheer nonsense.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, the hundreds of men and women in Transport Canada, the foot soldiers of Transport Canada are not to blame. They were the ones who came to this minister and blamed the minister and his policies for this action. That is what happened.

Justice Moshansky said very clearly this morning that deregulation in air transportation came into play with an inconsistent government policy of fiscal restraint. Those are his words.

The Deputy Prime Minister received warnings from within Transport Canada, the foot soldiers we are speaking of, that safety was being compromised under deregulation. He got the advice. He refused the advice. The Deputy Prime Minister owes Canadians an explanation.

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in his statement this morning, Justice Moshansky said in part: "After more than two years of intensive investigation and public hearings, I have concluded that this accident did not just happen by chance. It was allowed to happen". Later on, he said: "thereby abetting the carriers' permissive, corporate attitude".

I think this is lacking in justice to these thousands of men and women who are still active in the aviation system in Canada or who have previously been active. They are dedicated persons who contribute all their efforts to make the sky over Canada as safe as it is. There were five million movements of aircraft last year, we had 449 accidents, which is a 35 per cent improvement over 1981.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, five different Ministers of Transport have stood up in their places in this House and said: "When it comes to economic deregulation, safety will not be compromised".

Justice Moshansky, in the report that he released this morning, pointed out how very hollow those words were. A succession of staff reports, as far back as 1984 and then continuing past the white paper *The Freedom to Move* warned the Minister of Transport of the dangers of deregulation as it relates to safety. A number of times in this House members rose to point the same thing out to the Minister of Transport.

Knowing all of this, why did the government not change things so that the Dryden crash could have been prevented?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, again I will repeat for my friend across the aisle that the number of inspectors in 1984-85 was 456. In 1991-92 it is 569.