

can assure the hon. member that before any exploratory drilling is permitted by the Atomic Energy Control Board—and it would have to be permitted by the Atomic Energy Control Board—the Atomic Energy Control Board would take a very close look at it. Secondly, it would not consider any application for drilling from any company unless the prior approval of the province had been obtained.

Mr. Rodriguez: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact, as I have said, that this lake supplies the drinking water for the district, and in view of the fact that there have been difficult experiences with the Serpent River system in Algoma, would the minister assure the House that no licences will be granted to any corporation or individual to do any exploratory drilling for uranium on that lake in the Sudbury district?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I cannot give a categorical assurance other than this, that quite clearly before permissions of any kind are issued by the Atomic Energy Control Board the board would want to make a complete, thorough, comprehensive examination of the environmental effects. So that if any application were granted at any time, for drilling there or anywhere else, it would clearly have to meet the standard levels of health and safety.

Mr. Rodriguez: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that we have had these assurances in the past and there have been unfortunate experiences at Port Hope and Elliot Lake, would the minister assure the House that before any licences are granted by the Atomic Energy Control Board public hearings will be held at which hearings all environmental aspects of such drilling will be examined?

• (1450)

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I think if the hon. member were to look at provincial legislation he will find there is provision for public hearings under the Environmental Protection Act or an act of similar name. I would think that would be the appropriate area for hearings to take place, and Atomic Energy Control Board officials could be present.

Mr. Rodriguez: You want it after the fact.

Mr. Gillespie: I want to make it quite clear that I support the hon. member's interest in having full and public discussion, if in fact such application is called for.

Mr. Rodriguez: We want it before, not after.

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[Translation]

AIRPORTS

ALLEGED REPORT ON AIR-TO-GROUND COMMUNICATIONS— GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Transport.

Oral Questions

According to a report published in a Montreal daily newspaper last Friday, it appears that an exhaustive study conducted in 1970 by the office of management advisers, which comes under the Department of Supply and Services, concluded that the use of French in communications between pilots and controllers would make not only for more security but also greater efficiency in air traffic. I would like to ask the minister when this 200 page document was drawn to his attention and whether he had been made aware of it before ordering an inquiry into the use of bilingualism in air-ground communications?

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, officials of my department of course were aware of the document long before they began their specific work in attempting to find procedures which allow for the safe use of the two languages in air traffic control in the province of Quebec. It was after the original study that our safety people began to look at the practical use of the two languages and determined that it, indeed, was an important improvement in safety when the two languages could be made available because of the demand for them, with the result there was better communication between the air traffic controller and the pilot when the pilot was able to use his first language. That, however, was always applied with great care in that we insisted upon the maintenance of the high standards of safety which we have come to know and appreciate throughout this country, and that is how we have gone ahead with the matter since.

[Translation]

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

Since the minister is aware of such a report, may I ask him why it has not been made public, and how can he explain that when he instituted the inquiry commission on bilingualism he fought for such an inquiry because no other study had been conducted before the establishment of this commission? The minister now agrees that a rather serious study had already been made.

[English]

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I am sure if the hon. member puts a question on the order paper to the appropriate minister and not to me, since I am not and never was the minister to whom that report was made, he could have some further information about it. As far as I am concerned, whatever opinions may have been held about the question, what was needed was a very careful safety examination by our aeronautical safety people to determine the progress that could be made, and that is what we have been doing toward our dedicated purpose, based upon a conclusion of what is, indeed, most practical and safe, namely, that we will introduce bilingual air traffic control throughout the province of Quebec as soon as appropriate and safe procedures have been developed and certified for that purpose.