

Oral Questions

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Horner: The Leader of the Opposition taps his desk and says, "Isn't it terrible that nobody wants to listen to me today?" I could play the game, too, with all the laughter and merriment on that side of the House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, I did not want to embarrass the hon. gentleman. I am sorry he has become crotchety because of my question. The deficit in the first three-quarters of this year was \$63 million more than in the first three-quarters of last year, so I do not see how it can be declining.

My supplementary question to the minister is this: on June 10, the minister said, as reported by Canadian Press, that he would recommend to cabinet a package of promotional measures designed to reduce the lag in tourism and keep travelling Canadians at home. Perhaps handcuffs and leg-irons might do the trick.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: He said he was waiting for the recommendations of the special committee, which reported to the minister on August 30. My question is this—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: You do not like it, I know, but my question is this: has the minister now made his recommendations to the cabinet, and when will his promotional measures be announced which will correct this tourism deficit, this lag which we came "awfully close" to conquering in the first three-quarters of this year?

Mr. Horner: I do not know where the hon. member has been for the past year, but everybody in Canada knows that we have made great strides in convincing Canadians to travel across Canada. Every travel agent in Canada knows—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Horner: —and every one of my counterparts, every minister of tourism in the provinces, knows that in fact the Atlantic provinces and western Canada have benefited a great deal from the additional charter flights and the low-cost travel by rail that was brought into being by myself and announced last February.

Newfoundland, in particular, benefited a great deal because of the additional 314 charter flights which were made available to Canadians to travel within Canada this past year. We hope to upgrade them. We hope to have better co-operation from some of the major airlines. They have co-operated, but they have assured me that they will co-operate in an even better way next year.

[Mr. Horner.]

● (1432)

POST OFFICE

CANCELLATION OF NEXT-DAY DELIVERY SERVICE

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, the more Canadians travel around and see the country, the less popular Liberals become: perhaps there is some connection.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: My question is directed to the Postmaster General: it concerns a report on the Post Office which appeared in today's press, concerning the assured next-day delivery service. According to this report, not only has this assured next-day delivery service been cancelled, but it has not been in existence for more than 18 months and Canadians have not been told about it.

Is it true that the assured next-day delivery service is not functioning, according to the minister's own departmental officials? If it is true, why were Canadians not told that the program was officially cancelled?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, it is simply because Post Office people are very realistic about the service they can provide. Some time ago, when we did not have the same volume, when we did not have the same difficulties with transportation and all that, we guaranteed 24-hour delivery. Due to increased volume and various matters, we now know that we cannot give 24-hour service in all cases. Instead of lying to the people, we say that we will pick it up unconditionally. In many ways we can provide 24-hour delivery, but in certain circumstances we cannot.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, the Postmaster General has not dealt with the question of the deception involved in this. As the minister knows, on the mailboxes which are within a couple of hundred yards of this building, Canadians are urged to make a distinction and wrap their bundles of mail in different ways, with the expectation that within 24 hours, if they mail at certain times, it will be delivered elsewhere in Canada.

Will the minister tell the House why Canadians were not told 18 months ago, when the program was cancelled, that it was cancelled?

Mr. Lamontagne: Mr. Speaker, this program has not been cancelled; it is just phasing out.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lamontagne: It is.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: The Gong Show.

Mr. Lamontagne: May I explain why it is phasing out?

Mr. Hopkins: The Tories are phasing out.