

Oral Questions

at the table in these groups if they are not given some assistance.

Could the minister give the criteria by which he eliminates some groups and pays for the expenses of other groups if they appear or are part of the discussion?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we are not eliminating any group. We want to hear from every group and every individual farmer, either through telephone or through letter.

The fact of the matter is that the Canadian Federation of Agriculture is a national organization. The National Farmers Union is a national farm organization. I meet with them on a regular basis. My deputies and other officials meet with them on a regular basis. I will be speaking at the Canadian Federation of Agriculture annual meeting in Halifax next month.

Mr. Hovdebo: Can I be at the table?

Mr. Mazankowski: The door is wide open.

The hon. member asks: Can he be at the table? Our door is always open. As the hon. member knows, even if the hon. member has something constructive to offer he can come into my office and see me any time.

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AIR SAFETY

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Minister of Transport. It concerns the Gander air crash of December 12, 1985.

Yesterday new information came to light concerning this tragedy, as the minister will know. This information says, and I quote: "that the plane was carrying a member of a clandestine Delta team force that had been bloodied in a failed attempt to free U.S. hostages".

Would the minister explain to this House why two U.S. private investigators came up with this vital information when the minister's own government officials and the Canadian Aviation Safety Board failed to do so after four years of investigating? What is the reason we did not get that information before?

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the investigation is being conducted in the United States at this point in time.

Mr. Justice Estey, a well known and well respected former judge of the Supreme Court, has reviewed the Gander crash here and all the documents that went into it. We have followed his representation to us that no further investigation was necessary.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, the minister should know a little better than that. She should know that the judge in question only reviewed the existing information and was not permitted to review any additional information. I was not even permitted to provide him with the information that I had.

[*Translation*]

I would now like to ask the minister a supplementary question. With these new developments, in light of these new facts, is the Conservative government opposite now prepared to set up a royal commission of inquiry as we have been asking for four years? Yes or no? If not, why not?

[*English*]

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): No, Mr. Speaker, we will not.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiak): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. In light of the report on *CBC News World* today that the plane which crashed earlier near Inuvik had exploded in mid-air, and in light of the fact that National Defence had not confirmed whether the pilot was dead, would the minister inform the House as to the fate of the pilot, as reported by *CBC News World*?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, in reply to an earlier question, I informed the House that there had been the loss of a CF-18 operating from an FOL in Inuvik. I cannot confirm the outcome of that crash or the fate of the pilot at this time.