

was told that no reservations were being accepted after October 15. Will the Minister confirm that all VIA Rail trains will still be rolling after October 15 and that Canadians will still be able to use one of their great institutions, railway passenger service?

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, the difference between the Member and myself is that he is satisfied with a leaked document. I am not. Normally, I use official documents from Crown corporations.

As to the reservation, Mr. Speaker, if the Member wants an answer he just has to ask VIA Rail.

**Mr. Benjamin:** We did ask them and they said: "no reservations".

#### REFERENCE OF VIA RAIL BUSINESS PLAN TO COMMITTEE

**Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden):** Mr. Speaker, since VIA Rail was submitting a business report under Mr. deBelleval and now that it is submitting a business report under Mr. Lawless, the President of the CN, the coyote in charge of the chicken coop, are we to take it that there are two reports? Will he give a commitment not to allow the implementation of any VIA Rail business plan until after the plan has been referred to the Standing Committee on Transport that will travel across Canada to get the views of Canadians?

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I will not give any commitment. The Member knows that VIA Rail is operating its day to day operations. We announced recently that there was a fare increase of 15 per cent. It could happen again. There is no commitment which has to be given as long as I do not receive the report by VIA Rail.

Once again, we can use the document you used; it is usual for NDP to work with leaked documents, but it is not usual for the Government.

#### Oral Questions

#### NATIONAL REVENUE

##### RESULTS OF PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON TAX RETURNS

**Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Southeast):** Mr. Speaker, a public opinion survey yesterday suggested that 65 per cent of Canadians needed assistance in filing their income tax returns this year because they found them too difficult to complete.

Given the Government's attempts to simplify taxation for average Canadians, I wonder if the Minister of National Revenue could explain yesterday's alarming survey.

**Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, although Gallup polled some 1,016 people on this issue, our most recent statistics and factual information involve some 17,388,795 Canadian taxpayers. These figures categorically conclude that there has been virtually no change from previous years in Canadians going outside for paid tax assistance. It remains virtually at the same level that it has been over previous years, at some 29 per cent.

Further, we have been able to process, up until this Monday, 12,623,000 returns, which is way ahead of last year. We have refunded over 10 million cheques with an average refund of \$662 per Canadian. I think Canadians have responded very well to tax reform.

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[Translation]

#### ACID RAIN

##### INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN MONTEBELLO—PROPOSAL OF QUEBEC PREMIER—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of the Environment, I suppose I should direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister. The governors of the Northeastern States, the Premiers of the Atlantic Provinces and the Premier of Québec are meeting in Montebello to discuss some important issues, including acid rain. The Premier of Québec suggested Canada approve a measure, probably a joint measure, to control nitrogen oxide emissions in exhaust gases. Is your colleague the Minister prepared to endorse today, or as soon as possible, Mr. Bourassa's proposal regarding one of the major causes of acid rain?