

Oral Questions

ICAO standards which apply to airports in respect of fire protection have been observed. Canada is one of the leaders in the world in that respect. As a matter of fact, we ensure that the standards are observed at all airports, not just large international airports. Their job is to provide a fire-free corridor to an aircraft if there is an accident. The standards deal with the capacity to deliver water for foam production, and those standards are maintained everywhere. The hon. gentleman should not get too upset. The quarrel is about overtime, when people have to be called in for overtime performance. There is a savings of \$1.5 million. No safety standards are being breached or lowered.

An Hon. Member: Wrong.

Mr. Crosbie: This is absolutely correct. That is the information I have from the professionals in my Department. I do not propose to interfere, because I will be accused of interfering with my Department, just as the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has been accused of interfering with his Department. Imagine, a Minister actually interfering with his Department!

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, today we see the outrageous situation of the fire-fighters—

An Hon. Member: You are a clown, George.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baker: I will get to that in a minute. Today we see the outrageous situation of the fire-fighters requesting and receiving waivers to sign to “relieve them of responsibilities for the consequences they fear could result from these government cuts”, and the Canadian Airline Pilots’ Association saying certain pilots of jumbo jets may refuse to land at certain Canadian airports. I ask the Minister of Transport, speaking of interfering with his Department, whether this is the policy of the federal Government—to freeze employees, to have 657 persons with no overtime or no replacement if they are sick?

Can he explain to the House why one airport in Canada received a 20 per cent increase in employees, and that airport happened to be in his own riding? Is it to make up for the international traffic which he hijacked from Gander last year to prop up his own popularity?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, this is shocking news which the Hon. Member has just given me about St. John’s. This must have slipped through without my notice.

With reference to the CFR service there are various categories. Category 9 is the highest, and it depends upon the length and the size of aircraft. Toronto is a category 9. St. John’s was a category 6 but is now changing to a category 7 because a year and a half ago, when my predecessor was there

with his usual scrupulous fairness, they noticed larger aircraft and more traffic going into St. John’s airport. Therefore, they are changing from a category 6 to a category 7. I did my best to oppose this, but I was overruled by the Department!

When it comes to waivers, I wonder who will get a waiver from the hon. gentleman on his irresponsible statements.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

ACID RAIN—UNITED STATES COMMITMENT—CANADIAN DEFENCE POLICY

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, I should like to return to the Prime Minister on the question of the report by American officials that President Reagan might be seeking to alter Canadian defence policy in return for living up to his commitments on acid rain. The Prime Minister made a semi-forthright statement in his answer to the Leader of the Opposition. Could the Prime Minister assure the House, if such a linkage is sought by the President, that he will speak up forcefully against any kind of blackmail of that nature and reassert Canada’s right to have the United States do the right thing on acid rain because it is the right thing, not because we do anything in return?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has already made it abundantly clear that there is no linkage between Canada’s position on acid rain and our intentions with regard to defence. We expect the Americans to act on acid rain because it is the right thing to do. We intend to defend Canada, after so many years of neglect, because it is the right thing to do.

● (1450)

NEW BRUNSWICK’S COMMITMENT

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Prime Minister. It has to do with another form of blackmail that he has been experiencing with respect to acid rain, namely, the position being taken by the Government of New Brunswick concerning its commitment to live up to the agreement made in 1985. Can the Prime Minister tell us that he will not accept, on behalf of the Canadian Government, any linkage which may be suggested by the Premier or the Government of New Brunswick either with respect to Point Lepreau, the second reactor proposal, or with respect to moneys that were never in the original agreement in 1985?

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I think the position of the Government of Canada could not be clearer on this subject. We have said that we will not countenance any such linkage. We do not want our negotiations with either the Americans or with the provinces on acid rain to be reduced to horse trading. I understand that