

Oral Questions

● (1120)

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, we will look at the report which the minister says he will table before the end of the month, but may I ask the minister what evidence he is gathering other than the self-serving and biased questionnaire which he sent to the corporations? What other independent survey had he made of the situation resulting from his immense tax concessions?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, that survey was designed by Statistics Canada without any input from myself. When I table that report I will not have seen it previously, and I have made it a point not to see it previously. But I think the questions in that questionnaire will bear scrutiny on any statistical basis that the hon. member wants to attach to them. I just ask the hon. member, when the survey is submitted, to look at the questions as they read and to judge the responses as they are.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I do not quite know how the Minister of Finance expects a firm to tell him that they did not benefit from these goodies, but we will certainly look at the questions and answers. May I ask this question of the minister. In view of the fact that the largest part of the tax loss to the Canadian people was in the fast write-offs, about twice as large as from the tax cut, is the minister intending to continue these fast write-offs for equipment, which cost the taxpayer over half a billion dollars, and will he be prepared to have them reconsidered by parliament at the same time as the tax cut can be considered under a provision of the law?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, in calculating whatever the cost was to the Canadian people the hon. gentleman ought not only to take the gross effect of the cuts but should net it out with additional activity which brings in more tax and additional jobs which also bring in more tax. I think the hon. gentleman ought to consider as factual evidence the increase in jobs last year in the manufacturing and processing sectors, continuing into this year. There has also been a tremendous increase, some 46 per cent, in capital expenditure intentions. That was the purpose of the tax cuts, and—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):—the purpose in being fulfilled.

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[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORT

FUTURE MAINTENANCE OF BOEING 727 PLANES IN WINNIPEG—REPRESENTATIONS BY MONTREAL MACHINISTS TO MINISTER OF TRANSPORT

Mr. Gilles Caouette (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, since the Minister of Transport is absent, I wish to put my question to the right hon. Prime Minister.

Last week, representatives of the machinists unions of Montreal met the Minister of Transport concerning maintenance of future Boeing 727 in Winnipeg. Can the Prime

[Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton).]

Minister say whether discussions have in fact taken place in this regard and, if so, what will be the answer of the cabinet?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as I had the opportunity of indicating a moment ago, the Minister of Transport is in British Columbia at the present time, where he will meet the ministers of transport of the four western provinces. He did not report to me the meetings mentioned by the hon. member, but I shall bring the matter to the attention of the excellent parliamentary secretary to the minister. He will surely take action.

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[English]

TRANSPORT

REQUEST FOR REINSTATEMENT OF RAILWAY PASSENGER SERVICE IN NEWFOUNDLAND

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to that of the hon. member for Central Nova. In view of the fact the Minister of Transport has admitted that past national transportation policy is worthy of criticism, and in view of the fact one of the most critical areas has been removal of rail passenger service in Newfoundland, would the Prime Minister consider in cabinet reinstating this very important service to Newfoundland?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I take it this is a representation to the minister and I will convey it to him on the hon. member's behalf.

POSSIBILITY OF AMENDMENTS TO NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION ACT AFFECTING PRINCIPLE OF COMPETITION

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the right hon. Prime Minister. Having regard to the statement made in the House last week by the Minister of Transport to the effect that in his opinion the fundamental principle of competition in working out an over-all and comprehensive Canadian national transportation policy was wrong, is it the intention of the government to bring forth amendments to the National Transportation Act since competition is the basic principle upon which that act is founded?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat what I said in answer to the first question this morning, that the minister is bringing elements of a review of that act before the cabinet. It is certain that the over-all philosophy of the act which he was criticizing, the National Transportation Act of some years ago as adopted by this parliament, is something which is not only being reviewed but being questioned certainly by many of the premiers of the western provinces. It is in response to this that the minister made his speech and in response to this that he is reviewing that act.