

IMMIGRATION

VANCOUVER AIRPORT—WORKING CONDITIONS OF
IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS

Mr. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Employment and Immigration and his parliamentary secretary, I will direct the question to the acting minister. In this House last Friday, I asked the Minister of Employment and Immigration about a grievance of the immigration officials working at the Vancouver airport—a serious matter which they raised about their pay and their workload. The minister said he knew absolutely nothing about it and indicated he would look into it.

In the meanwhile, the union has brought to my attention a letter from the Postmaster General's office saying that the Minister of Employment and Immigration did know about the matter, that he had received complaints from many parliamentarians and that the concerns were known to him. I would ask the minister to ask his colleague to get his act together, to look into this matter and to do something about the problem that has been raised.

Hon. Lincoln M. Alexander (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the question raised the other day by the hon. member is, of course, important. I note that he is concerned again as a result of having further information which indicates that the Minister of Employment and Immigration did know of the particular circumstances involved. All I can say is that I will take notice of the hon. member's question and bring it to the attention of the minister just as soon as I can, in order that this matter can be looked into.

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[Translation]

MINORITIES

INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT WILL ASSIST FRANCOPHONE
MINORITIES OUTSIDE QUEBEC

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, my question was intended for the Secretary of State, but in his absence I shall direct it to the Acting Prime Minister. Yesterday, the Secretary of State met with the representatives of the Fédération des francophones hors Québec to discuss a proposal relating to the establishment of a tripartite commission. Given the fact that this commission will be instructed to recommend to cabinet the adoption of a general policy regarding the development of French-speaking communities outside Quebec, can the minister tell the House whether he is prepared to establish such a commission, as announced yesterday on the French network, and whether he is ready to commit the federal government to promote the development of French-speaking minorities in Canada?

[English]

Hon. Steven E. Paproski (Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport and Multiculturalism): Mr. Speaker, on behalf

Oral Questions

of the Secretary of State, I would like to say that the Secretary of State did meet with Paul Comeau of the FFHQ. They have set the groundwork for a commission. The FFHQ has got further in two months in negotiations with the Conservatives than in several years of talks with the previous Liberal government.

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[Translation]

NATIONAL UNITY

INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES EQUALITY OF
TWO FOUNDING PEOPLES—LINGUISTIC RIGHTS ENTRENCHED
IN CONSTITUTION

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is also for the Acting Prime Minister. One of the criteria demanded by the FFHQ for the selection of the tripartite commission membership is the unconditional acceptance of both founding peoples. Can the minister assure the House that the government recognizes the equality of both founding peoples and is the government prepared to entrench in the Canadian Constitution the linguistic rights of both French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians?

[English]

Hon. Steven E. Paproski (Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport and Multiculturalism): Mr. Speaker, I think there is no question about what the hon. member is saying. We on this side have always realized that this is a bilingual country and a multicultural society.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT RIGHTS OF MINORITIES BE ENTRENCHED IN
CONSTITUTION

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations. In light of the statement by the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport and Multiculturalism, I should like to ask a serious question of the Minister responsible for Federal-Provincial Relations. Is it true that the right hon. Prime Minister and the Progressive Conservative government are now prepared to recommend that protection of minority rights of Francophones and Anglophones be entrenched in the Canadian constitution, an initiative which was refused in the past by the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party?

● (1150)

[English]

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Mr. Speaker, this is one of the issues that formed the subject matter of our agenda in Halifax with the continuing committee of ministers on the constitution. It was one of the priority items.