

*Oral Questions*

Now, the figures are reversed. Indeed, the provinces, which used to collect 40 per cent of all taxes, now spend and collect 60 per cent of the money. The federal government is currently collecting 40 per cent, a proportion which is diminishing. Thus, the situation changed considerably over the last ten years, even without any constitutional amendment.

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[English]

**CANADA PORTS CORPORATION**

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the age old problem of patronage under the former Tory government is well known. Now it is coming back to haunt the new masters of patronage, the Liberal government.

Most recently Canada Ports Corporation chairman Arnold Masters has reportedly abused his expense account, billed an unreasonable amount of work and doctored the minutes of the corporation's board of directors.

Now it has been revealed that nearly 50 top executives of shipping companies from Vancouver to Halifax have written to the Minister of Transport calling for Masters' immediate resignation.

When will the Minister of Transport take action on these abuses, take the advice of the Canadian shipping industry and demand the resignation of Arnold Masters?

**Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that this is a serious matter.

Because we try to pay attention to the advice that is given by members of the third party in the House, in situations such as this one where serious allegations have been made and there is a call for drastic action we want to take some time to make sure we do the right thing.

The hon. member would know, as many of his colleagues have said on another matter that has been the subject of a great deal of discussion in the House, a person does not want to act rashly in these matters.

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has already claimed to be waiting on a report from the transport committee's study of marine policy before he takes any action.

The purpose of that study is to consult with users to determine how they want their port system changed to make it more viable. Those users have spoken and they have spoken loudly against Arnold Masters.

With this kind of unified opposition, when is the Minister of Transport going to act?

**Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member indicated, the appointment of the gentleman in question was made by the previous government.

He has been in office for several years and had acted as a director prior to that. We understand the importance of making sure that the operations of Canada Ports are done efficiently.

There have been questions raised by the hon. member and others at hearings of the Standing Committee on Transport. We are going to review the matter very seriously, but I want to emphasize that the Standing Committee on Transport, mandated by the House to look into the whole area of the operation of Canada Ports, is meeting across the country right now and will have an opportunity to hear from these people who signed their names to a letter. They can make their allegations directly before the committee.

Perhaps, if the hon. member has any other information that he wishes to make known to the Canadian public, he might want to step outside and make whatever allegations he wishes to make.

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[Translation]

**HEALTH**

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Pointing to the massiveness of the system, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said that Ottawa would work to eliminate overlap and duplication. It would therefore be devoting its efforts to areas under its jurisdiction. Under the constitution, health is a provincial matter.

To demonstrate his good faith, does the Prime Minister intend, as logic would dictate, to abolish the national forum on health that he chairs?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, health is a complex issue, and we have a responsibility in this area. We set up a national health service in Canada, which all Canadians and a large majority of Quebecers continue to support. It guarantees free health services to all Canadians and ensures that there will not be two categories of hospitals in Canada and Quebec—one for the rich, and one for the poor.

We wanted to ensure dignity, in Canada, for all who are sick. This is why the federal government stepped in. Canada's health system has set an example for the world, and the Americans would like to have it right now.

● (1435)

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, are we to understand from the Prime Minister that his "new" Canada in health matters simply means that Ottawa will force the provinces to meet ever more stringent national standards while cutting transfer payments to them and leaving them with the financial burden?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we decided to try to improve the systems. As I was saying earlier, we have succeeded in signing agreements with all