

Oral Questions

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiak): Mr. Speaker, the commission's report calls for a new deal for the aboriginal people of this country, based on a commitment by non-aboriginal Canadians to meaningful political and cultural autonomy and much greater economic self-sufficiency for aboriginal Canadians. Will the government commit itself today, as a first step in this new deal, to reinstate the funding it recently cut to aboriginal political organizations and communications societies?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, the decision to cut any program was very difficult. In particular, I and many other Canadians know how important these societies have been. We wish them well and know that most likely they will continue to survive. They cannot get all their funding from the government because my department does not have the funding available that it had before.

We have a task force in place to bring together all departments of the government that have an interest in this particular area. We are carefully examining any way in which we can be helpful.

Yesterday, I raised the very important conversations I had with the minister for the Northwest Territories, Titus Allooloo, and how beneficial those were. We are now bringing forward an agreement which will provide some interim funding for the organizations. But in the long run, as Mr. Titus Allooloo says:

Now that the immediate funding needs of the communications organizations have been met, we must not rest with our satisfaction. The challenge ahead is to determine alternative methods of supporting native communications in the NWT in order to ensure their future viability.

Mr. Speaker: I think we should proceed. The hon. member for Trinity—Spadina.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. He knows by the letters I sent to him Wednesday and Thursday that the southern Ontario regional air transportation system is under study by the federal Environment Assessment Review Office. The Toronto Harbour Commission, over

the objections of Toronto residents, Toronto council and even the royal commission on the future of the Toronto waterfront, is preparing to begin on April Fool's Day to expand the number of flights by eight times from Toronto Island Airport starting next week and to build a new terminal five times the size of the previous one.

• (1130)

Knowing that transportation is the chief cause of carbon dioxide pollution and that airplanes contribute five to 10 times as much as trains do per passenger, will the minister direct the Toronto Harbour Commission to halt its expansion until the environmental assessment review is finished in 1991?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the House will know that the island airport is operated under an agreement with the city of Toronto, the Toronto Harbour Commission and Transport Canada.

In an effort to meet the existing demand by passengers and to reduce the operating deficit of the airport they are taking steps to augment the services that are already there. As far as we understand those are entirely within the agreement and they are operating in such a way.

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, there is a more urgent matter, that of pollution of the atmosphere. I ask the minister to consider his powers as the Minister of Transport which overrides the matter of the agreement that the Toronto Harbour Commission is violating.

Will the minister act now not only for the sake of restricting more global warming by the airplane carbon dioxide pollution but also to protect the recreation areas, the industries on Toronto Island and the mainland, the Toronto core area traffic flow and the thousands of waterfront residents who built on the basis of that now-violated agreement? Will you intervene by ordering a freeze on increase of carriers, increase of flights and construction of that new terminal?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there are several areas of my friend's question which could be corrected. As far as I know there is no industry on the Toronto Island. That is for sure, certainly not in the winter.