

Oral Questions

trains, is supposed to detail how VIA Rail will operate within the budget cuts.

Second, a far more important study has been done which details the extensive VIA Rail study and points out just exactly where the corporation will be going to the year 2000.

In light of that and given that the business plan will destroy VIA, will the Minister of Transport or the Government commit on the floor of this House to release the complete VIA study before VIA Rail is destroyed?

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member has mentioned, the business plan from VIA will be in our hands at the end of June. When we receive that plan, we will look at it and all other studies and will make the decisions necessary at that time.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, the detailed study which has been commissioned gives a lot of information and new novel ideas as to how to maintain rail passenger service in this country. By waiting and allowing the business plan to be implemented before that study is released or looked at will cause VIA Rail to be out of business.

Would the Minister please confirm that this Government is not interested in the facts, is not interested in saving VIA Rail, but is out to destroy that rail company?

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary. We do believe in the facts and that is why we do not make decisions until we get them.

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CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

CANADIANIZATION PROGRAM

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Communications, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister.

I am informed that an internal CBC memo, dated May 29, reveals that its Canadianization program has been put on hold for this year. Even before the massive cuts announced in the Budget take effect, the CBC has had

to abandon its goal of 95 per cent Canadian content in prime time. Also, just last year in June, a communications policy document stated that the Government supports Canadianization at the CBC.

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister the following questions: Does this Government still support Canadianization at the CBC? If so, will the Deputy Prime Minister ensure that the CBC has sufficient funds to allow Canadianization to proceed?

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, of course the Government supports the objective of Canadianization of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. I believe that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, as befits any arm's length agency, is conducting internal studies as to what its priorities will be in light of the Budget.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW PRESIDENT

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same Minister. It is pretty clear that despite support of Canadianization the Government has not provided the funds so that the CBC can live up to its mandate.

Will the Minister at least provide support to the CBC in this time of crisis at the corporation? Will he tell Canadians this afternoon that he will recommend to Cabinet that it appoint a new CBC president before Mr. Juneau steps down next month?

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that there will be a vacancy to fill until the president and chairman of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation takes his retirement. The Government is well aware that that vacancy is about to occur and of course is making the appropriate plans.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF LOW LEVEL FLIGHTS

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

Would the Minister explain to the House why the Government has chosen to inform the United States of approval for low level bomber runs by the United States Air Force in western Canada prior to informing Cana-