

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I will see whether I can help the hon. member.

[Translation]

REASON FOR USE OF OLD COACHES ON
SAGUENAY-LAC-SAINT-JEAN ROUTE

Mr. C. A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, while the minister is trying to do his best, I shall ask him a small service: I do not know if it is meant to play a trick on people in my constituency, but an old passenger car has just been put in service, directly from the museum, a coach which dates back to 1900, with wooden benches and heated with a huge oil furnace. That is making fun of people! I thought it was to save energy! I urge the minister to examine the matter and at the same time try to communicate with Mr. Robert—we also call him “Roberts” and “Robert”—he is responsible for that, and to put an end to that joke, because that is making fun of people!

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[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

REASON FOR EARLY RETIREMENT OF ADMIRAL BOYLE

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I have a question to direct to the Minister of National Defence. Yesterday the hon. gentleman put out a very uninformative press release concerning the early retirement of Vice-Admiral Boyle, the senior naval officer in the Canadian Forces. Will he enlighten the House as to the reasons for this early retirement, bearing in mind that last year the Admiral received the Order of Military Merit in the grade of Commander for conspicuous merit and exceptional service to Canada?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): I think the press release was explicit. It reflects the normal rotation of commanders which has taken place throughout the armed forces with the appointment of the new CDS. Admiral Boyle has served with distinction and vigour. I had hoped he would serve even longer but he has chosen to take early retirement. It is a decision I regret, but I know the country and the Navy in particular are grateful for his distinguished services.

● (1130)

Mr. McKinnon: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister deny that Admiral Boyle was asked to resign some few weeks ago but refused to do so? Or is the minister telling the House that action culminating in the early retirement of the senior naval officer in our forces was carried to an irreversible stage without his knowledge?

Mr. Danson: Mr. Speaker, I can absolutely deny the allegation of the hon. member. Quite the reverse was the case; he

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was asked to remain and, as a matter of fact, at that time indicated that he would.

Mr. McKinnon: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The minister may use whatever euphemisms he wishes to attempt to conceal the fact that Admiral Boyle was fired by the route of being made an offer that he could not possibly accept.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McKinnon: Is it not true that after he declined to resign he was offered a position which would have removed him from any participation in naval affairs for the rest of his service?

Mr. Danson: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is still suggesting that the admiral was asked to resign. He was not asked to resign. Admiral Boyle is acting completely on his own volition, and indeed the other work that I had hoped he would take would be of considerable importance to the future of the armed forces of this country.

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ENERGY

NORTHERN PIPELINE—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE NO
NEGOTIATIONS WITH UNITED STATES UNTIL LYSYK
COMMISSION REPORTS

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister. There is a report today from U.S. government sources that the government of Canada will have to start formal negotiations with the United States on a pipeline across Canada by mid-August, if not several weeks sooner, if we hope to have any say in the United States government's decision, and that the extra time is needed for the President to meet his deadline of September 1. Will the government state unconditionally that there will be no such negotiations until the Lysyk commission has reported? It is supposed to report by August 1. Will the minister state that there will be no negotiations with the United States until after that report is received?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am aware of a report to that effect. It is not the intention of the government of Canada to open negotiations with the United States within the time frame suggested. It is obvious that there will be discussions between the two countries from time to time on these questions, but the matter of negotiations is not in the cards within the time frame suggested.

NORTHERN PIPELINE—POSSIBILITY OF DEBATE PRIOR TO
DECISION ON CONSTRUCTION

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The Acting Prime Minister will agree, I am sure, that the deadline set in the United States is one set by legislation, and that legislation can always be changed if