

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT REAL CAUSES OF AIR CONTROLLERS' DISPUTE
BE IDENTIFIED

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I wish to put a question to the Minister of Transport.

The Minister having gone to France where he found out that it was possible to fly in French and English, and given the statements made Friday night by the Prime Minister concerning that matter, can he tell the House whether that question of bilingualism, which seems to be exaggerated by the parties involved in the conflict, is as serious as it seems to be? Does it have to do only with bilingualism or is there anything deeper than that?

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Well, Mr. Speaker, there are some very complex issues that can combine together, and I think in this case they did. I do not think that any good purpose would be served by my trying to analyse the exact nature of the issues at this stage; I do not think the rules of the House would give me the time that may be required to do that.

[Translation]

SUGGESTION COMMISSION STUDY ASPECTS OF
BILINGUALISM OTHER THAN THOSE RELATED TO
CONTROLLERS

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a supplementary.

In view of his answer, can the minister tell us, with respect to the commissioners who will be responsible for the inquiry on that matter which so far seems to be limited to bilingualism whether the commission will deal with other problems which are related to the question of bilingualism and of which practically everybody is aware?

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think the terms of reference will speak for themselves.

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● (1430)

PENITENTIARIES

CONSULTATION WITH PRISON GUARDS ON CAPITAL
PUNISHMENT BILL—NUMBER OF GUARDS RESIGNING IF
CAPITAL PUNISHMENT ABOLISHED

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, will the Solicitor General advise whether there was any meaningful consultation with prison guards or other correctional officers in reference to Bill C-84 prior to it being introduced in the House, and prior to the vote being held on second reading, other than ad hoc discussions with various officers at various institutions from time to time? In other words, was there collective consultation and did the minister discuss with officers of the union whether they would continue to work?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, before we introduced the peace and security program we

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met with officials of the correctional officers' union and told them the different items we had in mind, including the abolition of capital punishment. I must say there was considerable disagreement with us on that point and there was not much room for discussion. The same opinion was conveyed to me on other occasions that I met with the executive of the union, and of locals of the union at different prisons throughout Canada.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, I would ask a supplementary question because this is a very serious matter. Did the minister determine from any of these ad hoc discussions that the personnel in federal institutions, whose grave and grim responsibility and duty it is to see that society is protected against escapes and, indeed, to protect inmates against homicide by violent, incarcerated criminals, particularly in light of the fact that 15 inmates have been killed from 1971 to 1976, will continue their jobs, or how many will quit or resign if the bill becomes law immediately?

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I do not recall on the occasions that I did meet with the union that they ever threatened to withdraw their services or quit if the bill were passed. I must point out also that I have met with other people who work in the prisons, such as classification officers, parole officers and so on, who also work in close contact with dangerous inmates and they do not hold the same opinion as correctional officers. I might say that in other countries where they have abolished capital punishment, and in many states of the United States, the correctional officers have carried on quite successfully after abolition of capital punishment.

CONTINGENCY PLANS IF PRISON GUARDS RESIGN

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate that those in the administrative branch would take a different position. May I put this question to the Solicitor General. What contingency measures has he set up, in light of his statement today in committee that if guards and correctional officers wish to resign because of the law they will have to do so? Therefore, the penitentiary would be left with a dangerous situation in relation to the protection of society and other inmates who are serving terms for various offences, and whose disposition and character, irrespective of the offence for which they were convicted, make them ideal prisoners, and as such they are entitled to the same protection as if they were free persons in society and not incarcerated?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I told the hon. member this morning at the committee meeting, or the commissioner of penitentiaries told him, that following the vote so far only three persons have resigned and those were in the Quebec region. We have no indication that there will be mass resignations or a strike. If there were to be a strike we do have a contingency plan similar to the one we had last year when there was a one day walk-out in Quebec. We had people to man the prisons on that occasion.