

In addition, I have sent a telex to my provincial colleagues who have special responsibilities for immigration, recommending that we have a meeting to discuss this matter and come up with a figure that would be an annual target, so to speak, of the number of people we might anticipate receiving under the refugee program. As a result of the action taken by this government, people on the ship in Hong Kong were able to get off and we are taking people from that particular camp. We have not yet had a response from the Philippines. We indicated we are prepared to take from the camp 300, 400 or 500 from that group in order to help alleviate the situation.

I say again that this is really a world problem. We must have some direction from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees so that we do not have to act on an ad hoc basis and so that we do not act in a counterproductive way in respect of those countries which are countries of first haven and have a problem on their doorstep which they face on an almost daily basis.

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the minister that at no time have spokesmen who have spoken on this issue ever suggested that the number of refugees that Canada would be willing or able to take would in any way solve the tragic situation in Southeast Asia. The United Nations has clearly indicated that there could be as many as half a million refugees there by the end of this year.

Is the minister willing to now move forward under a section of the Immigration Act and allow churches and similar sponsoring institutions which have indicated their willingness to sponsor Southeast Asian refugees to sponsor these refugees in addition to the number of refugees to which Canada is committed?

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, not only are we prepared to move ahead, but we have already moved ahead. We are contacting church groups and service clubs. Within two days of an address I made in Ottawa, we were contacted by the Kinsmen Club of Canada which indicated they were having a meeting of their top executives from across the country and that they were very interested in this sponsorship approach. They know that it will not be in lieu of, but in addition to, the government's commitment.

I expect that from the churches, service clubs and other groups we may very well get a significant number of refugees into this country in addition to the governments' commitment, both provincial and federal.

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[Translation]

TRANSPORT

RESUMPTION OF AIR CONTROLLER TRAINING COURSES IN CORNWALL—INQUIRY WHETHER SIX-MONTH DEADLINE WILL BE OBSERVED

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister. In light of the report on an

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inquiry which had been ordered and justified concerning the students of the Cornwall institute studying to be air controllers, the minister having recognized that there had been some involuntary discrimination, and following the recommendation of the Commissioner of Official Languages to the effect that within six months those courses will be given in French, could the parliamentary secretary assure us now that the deadline recommended by the Commissioner of Official Languages will be respected?

Mr. Charles Lapointe (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transport will do everything possible to respect the deadline recommended by the Commissioner of Official Languages. It has been recognized that involuntary discrimination had taken place. There are now French-speaking teachers at the institute. The students, at least those who have been interviewed during a CBC program two weeks ago, have said they were satisfied with the changes in the situation. We hope to be able to offer all courses in both official languages before the end of 1980, which is, I think, one of the deadlines established by the Commissioner of Official Languages.

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[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

ACTION ON COMPLAINTS OF ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. I listened carefully to the Prime Minister's reply to the hon. member for Egmont, but the press report clearly states that the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, through its president, Yvette Rousseau, took the stand that the government has been callously ignoring its recommendations in a number of particulars that are set out in the report.

May I ask the Prime Minister what the government intends to do about two, in particular, of the complaints made by the Advisory Council on the Status of Women? One is that only 20 of 51 federal departments have full-time co-ordinators concerned with equal opportunities for women. The other is that the number of women participants in high status career assignment programs has dropped from 30 per cent in 1975 to 14 per cent at the present time. Will the government take steps to meet these two specific complaints of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the minister responsible for the status of women has taken account of this report. We will discuss it in cabinet and take whatever action is needed. In my answer to the hon. member for Egmont, I was singling out a particular point quoted by him to the effect that in some way the government was blaming women for the increase in the size of the unemployment figures. I said that is categorically false.