

Oral Questions

notice of the hon. member's question and see that he gets a complete answer as soon as possible.

[English]

USE OF UNITED STATES AIRCRAFT IN FIGHTING FOREST FIRES

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Minister of Transport. Is the minister aware of, and does he support the policy of his department whereby, while Canadian firefighting planes sit idle, his department is licensing American planes to come in from Michigan to fight fires in Ontario?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, if my friend would like to give me specifics on that, I would reply immediately. As a general proposition, it is well known that we favour Canadian operators.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

SALARY INCREASE FOR SENIOR EXECUTIVES—EQUITY FOR CLERKS

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East-Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. In view of the fact that the President of the Treasury Board announced yesterday a salary increase of 9.5 per cent for public servants in the senior executive and deputy minister groups, in view of the fact that the government's most recent offer to members of the clerical, regulatory and data processing groups was 7 per cent, and since the senior executive salary range is from about \$35,000 to \$65,000, while most clerks—85 per cent of whom are women—are making a piddling \$12,800 per year, is the minister now willing to improve the government's offer to the clerks to bring it closer to the same dollar value gained by the senior executive group, or at least to a reasonable level comparable with inflation in order to live up to the government's throne speech commitment to treat working women equitably?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, the increase for the senior management group announced yesterday is very reasonable, and less—as I indicated—than the amount suggested to us by the advisory group on executive remuneration. This group still lags substantially behind the private sector.

I have also said—and the hon. member knows—that the policy of the government is to establish comparability with the outside sector. That being said, the group in question has opted for the conciliation route. The conciliation board, I understand, is likely to be appointed in the very near future. I am sure that a successful and fair resolution of that particular wage negotiation will take place in the relatively near future.

REDUCTION IN FEMALE STAFF OF DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East-Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, I think the government should take the lead in this area. My supplementary question will be to the minister of unemployment—the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Mr. McDermid: You were right the first time.

Mr. Parker: I think so. In view of the minister's pretensions as a champion of equality for women, and in view of his vaunted employment strategy for women, will the minister tell the House why he has allowed the women's employment division of his department to degenerate from five officers to one, and why he has no intention of filling the recently vacated position of chief of the women's employment division?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, there is absolutely nothing degenerate going on in our department at all.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Axworthy: Madam Speaker, I would like to tell the hon. member that every department and every commission has had the experience of a restraint program which has been applied by past governments but that positions and person-years are available in this area. I have instructed, as part of that restraint program, X budgeting. It came to my attention a few weeks back. I have asked to have them restored.

As to why the position is not being filled, the present incumbent has taken sick leave, and the position is open until such time as it can be filled. She is away for a period of time and we have to determine whether she will return to it or whether we have to start the normal recruitment procedure to find a replacement.

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IMMIGRATION

ISSUANCE OF MINISTERIAL PERMITS—DEPORTATION PROCEDURES

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I want to pose some questions to the Minister of Employment and Immigration with regard to the Calamusa case.

I was interested in the minister's allegation that the procedures followed in this matter were standard procedures, and I think the House would like to know exactly what standard procedures are. I wonder if the minister would confirm for the House that it is his position and that of the government that it is standard procedure to provide a government car to take a deported person out of the country, hand that person a ministerial permit and then wait and drive that person back from the point outside the country to the city in Canada from which that person was originally driven in a government car. Is that a