

Oral Questions

● (1440)

INDUSTRY

APPOINTMENT OF PETRO-CHEMICAL TASK FORCE

Hon. Bud Cullen (Sarnia-Lambton): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. The oil based petrochemical industry welcomed the announcement of the Minister about assistance to Petromont and the loan guarantees to Petrosar, which the shareholders applauded. However, the second part of the Minister's press release indicated that there would be a task force established with two co-chairmen. I wonder if the task force is expected to be in place soon or if the co-chairmen have been selected. If so, I would like to know their names and when the task force is expected to be mobile.

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, first I want to apologize to Hon. Members. I have been a little tardy in putting together the task force, contrary to what I originally intended. However, the co-chairmen are in place and will be having a meeting this week with our officials. We have asked the co-chairmen to suggest competent people from the industry from across Canada to be represented on the task force. I do not think it is appropriate to announce any individual names until such time as the whole task force is finalized.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

REQUEST THAT CF-104 AIRCRAFT BE BANNED FROM AEROBATIC DEMONSTRATIONS

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Madam Speaker, I would like to follow up on the comments about the absolutely unjustified carnage which has come about as a result of crashes involving the CF-104 Starfighter. My question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. If the Minister and the Government are not prepared to stop the carnage, would they be prepared to change the operational role of the aircraft in its operational procedure by not allowing it to participate in any more aerial demonstrations, any more aerobatic demonstrations, and to keep the aircraft out of civilian airports where it must approach or depart over heavily populated areas such as Vancouver and Winnipeg? Would he be prepared to make some operational changes in the use of the aircraft so that the danger is minimized in its use?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I think that some people are trying to make a tragedy of this, which, of course, is regrettable. However, in this instance we were flying in Germany, accompanied by the German Air Force. We were both doing some exercises. An accident happened which, again, is very regrettable. That does not mean that the aircraft is no good and should be put out of

service. It has great utility as an air mission aircraft. It must be used in all kinds of training circumstances.

Unfortunately an accident happened, and I agree that it was very tragic, and I regret it. It was because we were requested by the Germans to fly with them in a low level mission practice. Obviously, the Germans were flying the same kind of aircraft we were flying, so it was strictly an unfortunate accident. For example, if the Hon. Member drives the same kind of car as I do and he has an accident and I do not have an accident, does that mean that his car is no good? It could depend on many causes. Why does the Hon. Member not wait, because the investigation is currently being carried out by the German Government and our people in Germany, see what in fact was the real cause, and stop making it appear to be so dramatic?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Skelly: Madam Speaker, when 600 aircraft out of a total manufacturing component of 1,900 crash, there is absolutely no excuse for the Minister's response. There is no excuse for the Government to continue to tolerate an accident rate like that anywhere.

REQUEST FOR DOCUMENTATION ON ACCIDENTS

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Madam Speaker, would the Minister of National Defence be prepared to provide the House with the documentation on the remainder of the Canadian accidents back since the beginning of production, so that the public can have an examination into other civilian aviation expertise as to a common thread in the kind of accidents which have occurred? Would he be prepared to table in this House the results of the other accident findings, instead of keeping the material secret?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, there is no question of keeping information secret. Of course, the investigation is still secret because sometimes we ask opinions in confidentiality. However, the causes of all the accidents which have occurred since 1962 are all well known to us. I will in due course be able to supply the Hon. Member with the reasons why the accident happened.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

REQUEST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY TASK FORCE ON YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Albert Cooper (Peace River): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration and relates to the questions which were asked earlier by my colleague, the Hon. Member for St. John's East, involving the whole area of youth unemployment which has now hit almost crisis proportion. Is it not now time for a parliamentary task force on youth unemployment and youth issues in this country?