Oral Questions

I want to ask the Minister of Transport this question. Is it accurate to say that an environmental impact study was done on the VIA Rail cuts or was it not done?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat what I have already said twice. I believe that we should wait for the announcement day to know exactly which study has been done and what for. I believe that it is normal to wait for the announcement, and we will answer that question on the day of the announcement.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport should remember that in the spring of this year the Prime Minister said categorically in the House that no such assessment had been done.

What I want to find out from the Minister of Transport is the following. Yes, we will find out when all the reports come down, but the people of Canada want to have an understanding in advance as to whether your government has done the correct work by having an environmental impact study done. Will you indicate yes or no? Was such a study done to test the impact on the environment?

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I can only say, wait for the day of the announcement.

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CAMBODIA

Mr. Robert Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The Hun Sen Government of Cambodia has established a free market system and a Constitution calling for multi–party internationally supervised elections and even including the abolition of the death penalty. The Vietnamese have left Cambodia and the government enjoys the support of the vast majority of Cambodians.

What more does the Government of Canada want before it begins moving away from the murderous Khmer Rouge and toward the Hun Sen government?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the Government of Canada in Cambodia is to contribute to a circumstance in which the Cambodian people themselves can decide their own futures.

I listened with interest to the hon. member's personal view that the Hun Sen regime enjoys the widespread support of the people of Cambodia. That is far from clear. There has been a Vietnamese withdrawal. That Vietnamese withdrawal is due in part to the fact that Canada, other western countries, and our allies in ASEAN maintained a very strong position over the last several years. We think this is not the time to break that kind of strong position. No one wants anything to do with Pol Pot or the Pol Pot faction of the Khmer Rouge regime. The reality is that the Khmer Rouge commands authority in Cambodia.

When we have been looking, as we did actively through the Paris Peace Conference this summer, for a means by which there could be a coalition government or an interim authority that could speak for all of the Cambodian people we were seeking to minimize the role of the Khmer Rouge.

I can assure the hon. member that I have been following this matter with our allies closely, including most recently in discussions with the foreign ministers of the other members of the G–7 in New York on Thursday night.

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HOUSING

Mr. Harry Chadwick (Brampton—Malton): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Housing. The minister has been accused of saying that there is no national housing crisis in Canada. How can the minister justify this statement? Would he clarify these comments for the House?

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, the article in the press referred of course to a poll that had been done in which Canadians were asked to identify their two greatest concerns.

In that poll across the country only 22 per cent of Canadians identified housing as one of their two major concerns, whereas in the city of Toronto area where the hon. member comes from some 43 per cent identified housing as a major concern.

It was in fact my comments relating to that poll that were reported in the press and indicated, obviously, my desire to see many, many more Canadians seeing this as a priority and seeing this as a crisis as I do and as the government does.