

NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD

ILLEGAL TRANSFER OF OPERATING COSTS TO ENERGY SUPPLIES ALLOCATION BOARD—DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, my question, also, is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. Since there is evidence from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts that the action taken by the National Energy Board in transferring \$90,000 of its operating costs to the operations of the Energy Supplies Allocation Board clearly contravened the provisions of the Financial Administration Act and was illegal, and in view of the fact that the committee recommended in its sixth report that disciplinary action be taken immediately by the minister, can the hon. gentleman now advise the House what action has been taken in this matter; specifically, who was disciplined and to what extent?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): I am informed that on August 16 my predecessor wrote to my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, drawing attention to this recommendation of the standing committee. I do not have details as to the disciplinary action which was taken in the matter but I am advised by my colleague that he has taken an extremely serious view of the situation and introduced measures to ensure it will not occur again.

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GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE ACCOUNTS OF ALL CROWN AGENCIES AUDITED BY AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): A further question to the President of the Treasury Board, Mr. Speaker. According to the 1976 public accounts, the financial statements of certain Crown corporations were checked by private accounting firms. Will the minister arrange that in future the accounts of all Crown corporations and government agencies are dealt with by the Auditor General?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): That matter has been considered and there have been discussions with the Auditor General with regard to it.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Everything is under study.

Mr. Andras: For the very good reason that this is not as simplistic a subject as the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton would imply.

Mr. McKenzie: Can the minister tell us whether the government intends to implement recommendation 17 contained in the report of the independent review committee of the Auditor General which recommends that the Auditor General should have right of access to the financial records and documents of all Crown corporations such as Air Canada, and will he be instructing the Auditor General to carry out detailed and

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complete audits of the accounts of all Crown corporations and government agencies, not just general reviews?

Mr. Andras: The detailed answer to that question will be available to the House when I make my comments on the second reading of the Auditor General's bill.

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TRANSPORT

REASON FOR HOLDING MONEY IN REVOLVING SURPLUS ACCOUNT IN CONNECTION WITH AIRPORTS

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): I might preface my question by saying, Mr. Speaker, that our "over-kill" cannot possibly match the government's over-spending. My question, too, relates to the Auditor General's report but it is directed to the Minister of Transport. It should be the cardinal rule of governments everywhere—

Some hon. Members: Question!

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member would ask his question.

Mr. Lawrence: In view of the treasury board regulation which prevents the slop-over of surpluses from one one department, agency or program to another, what possible justification can the minister have for holding back, in a revolving surplus account, the sum of \$65 million this year for use in relation to airports?

An hon. Member: That is for travelling expenses.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

● (1440)

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that the airport revolving account was set up for the purpose of making sense of our investments in our airports across the country and to assure, from an accounting point of view, we were able to have the air mode completely responsible for the costs associated with it.

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GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

SUGGESTION DEPARTMENTS NOT HOLD OVER SURPLUSES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): Mr. Speaker, as this item is specifically criticized by the Auditor General, along with another one in the Department of Supply and Services for \$3 million, I now ask the President of the Treasury Board whether at long last he will enforce the regulations of the Treasury Board so that there will be absolutely no surplus held over from one year to another which effectively destroys any possibility we have in this House of