

*Oral Questions***AIR TRANSPORT****ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION AGAINST FRENCH-SPEAKING STUDENTS AT AIR CONTROLLERS' TRAINING INSTITUTE, CORNWALL**

Mr. Ed. Lumley (Stormont-Dundas): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. On Thursday, February 8, the Minister of Transport, in reply to a question from the hon. member for Joliette, indicated that French-speaking students attending the Transport Canada training institute in Cornwall had suffered discrimination. This response, unfortunately, reflected on the integrity and competence of the staff of the institute.

In view of the report made public today by the minister's very competent parliamentary secretary, which indicated no evidence of discrimination, would the minister clarify the situation?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to have the opportunity to do so. I did not say that there has been discrimination, but in referring to the fact that certain problems had been corrected I did, unfortunately, use the word "discrimination" in terms of the things which did not at this time exist. I certainly apologize for the implication that it carried or that was put into it by the news media as a positive statement of there having been discrimination, which there was not.

I join the hon. member in recognizing the work of the hon. member for Charlevoix who looked into this matter and confirmed there has been no discrimination. He made certain recommendations upon which I have acted. I hope this will bring about a better atmosphere for the students involved, as well as for the institution as a whole.

* * *

HEALTH AND WELFARE**ASSIGNMENT OF CHILD TAX CREDIT TO WINNIPEG HOUSING AUTHORITY TO MEET ARREARS IN RENT**

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. It is based on the fact that the Winnipeg Housing Authority, which operates, I believe, under direction of the provincial government, has sent written notice to tenants in public housing who are in arrears in their rent that the authority has learned from the income tax department about the child tax credit that is to be received this spring, that it is a windfall and therefore they are being summoned into the office of the Winnipeg Housing Authority, told to bring certain documents and to be prepared to make an assignment of that money to the authority.

In view of the fact that we understood that this money was to go to the mothers of Canada and was not to be assignable, is there not something the minister can do to stop this nefarious practice?

[Mr. Lang.]

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I read the letter sent by the Winnipeg Housing Authority signed by a Mr. Malley, whom I would demote immediately if I had the power to do so—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss Bégin: —blackmailing the tenants, threatening to throw them into the street if they did not assign their child tax credit to pay rents or arrears. My colleague, the Minister of National Revenue, is looking into the legality of this action. At first glance, it seems absolutely illegal to ask for power of attorney from mothers without reimbursing them at least 85 per cent of the cheques because these people think of themselves as tax discounters. We are looking into that and I will report to the House as soon as we have the answer.

One thing is sure: if a department store or a large business was doing that, the Conservative opposition would call those people jackals. I will be very curious to see if the Conservative members from Manitoba are going to state loud and clear their opposition to that policy which, of course, is against the people. I want to say to mothers that they have the right to refuse the appointment which is forced upon them and to refuse to bring their income tax returns and receipts to the Winnipeg Housing Authority.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that in some other provinces other bodies are also doing things that seem to deny to mothers the full benefit of the child tax credit, is the minister taking steps to make sure that mothers right across Canada get the full benefit of this child tax credit?

Miss Bégin: Mr. Speaker, I have personally supervised the program and the publicity. We have television clips scheduled to be shown all over Canada right now, asking mothers to apply for that program. It is not an automatic program such as the family allowance. Mothers have to file an application. I think all community groups in the country are now aware of the program and have received small funds for their expenditures in having neighbours helping to fill out the forms in order to get the money.

* * *

AIRPORTS**NAVIGATIONAL AIDS AND FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT FOR CASTLEGAR, B.C.**

Mr. Bob Brisco (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Now that the Minister of Transport has foisted upon the residents of Castlegar and the users of that airport a third party contract arrangement which is singularly unpopular, is he now prepared to make a forward step in the provision of immediately needed navigational aids and firefighting equipment?