

AIR TRANSPORT

SUGGESTED SEPARATE MINISTRY FOR CIVIL AIR TRANSPORT—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, I have a brief question for the Minister of Transport. In view of Air Canada's continuing problems including the resignation of the vice-president of marketing, and questions raised concerning the status of the vice-president of personnel, as well as other well known difficulties which continue to plague Air Canada, has the minister considered, in the context of his long-promised reorganization of transport policies, a separate ministry for aviation to focus more clearly on the needs and priorities of Canadian civil air transport?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, up to now the only aspect which has been of interest is the formation of a separate corporation in respect of Air Canada rather than it being operated as a subsidiary of the CNR, but we have never entertained the other formula that is proposed.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, in view of the rapid growth in civil air transport and the rapidly increasing complexity of transportation generally, will the minister undertake to have an in depth study made on the advantages and disadvantages that are obvious under such an arrangement of a separate ministry of air transport, which is the case in Britain and some other countries?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, this is one of the aspects which is now under consideration.

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[Translation]

INDUSTRY

PROPOSED AID FOR FURTHER PROCESSING OF ASBESTOS IN QUEBEC

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the right hon. Prime Minister.

With regard to the conflict in Thetford Mines, and in a much more serious mood, could the Prime Minister tell the House whether he is prepared to give his government's technical or financial aid to any initiative from the Quebec's government with a view to processing asbestos on its own territory, and so to the development of this secondary sector?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I am very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to see at least one hon. member opposite being serious about the matter. The answer generally is yes, Mr. Speaker, since there is already very intensive cooperation between the Department of the Environment and the governments of every province with regard to environment matters and production of raw materials. The Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce has already stated the government's policy, which is to encourage the processing of Canadian raw materials before exporting them.

Oral Questions

[English]

INFORMATION

REQUEST FOR PUBLICATION OF REPORT RECOMMENDING THAT MORE INFORMATION BE MADE PUBLIC

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, in light of the very important discussions now going on in respect of freedom of information, I should like to ask the President of the Privy Council whether the government is prepared to release the report made in the Privy Council, which is alleged to propose that more information be made public, but a report which is now being held confidential?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is anything being held confidential. The government has accepted that principle and does intend, as I have said when appearing before the standing committee, to reveal all the information that can be revealed without danger to the security or the economic health of the country.

Mr. Stanfield: Let it all hang out.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that in his excitement the hon. gentleman forgot to answer the major part of my question, that is whether the government is prepared to release that very interesting report?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure there is such a report. Perhaps the hon. gentleman knows more about these secret reports than I. All I can say is that my predecessor advised his colleagues, and I support that advice which is expressed in the guidelines which begin by stating that all information should be given to the House of Commons, except in certain specific categories.

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● (1430)

NORTHERN AFFAIRS

INQUEST INTO CRASH OF PANARCTIC PLANE—ALLEGED REFUSAL OF WITNESSES TO APPEAR—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Wally Firth (Northwest Territories): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. It relates to an inquiry into a PanArctic plane crash which happened at Rae Point in the Northwest Territories in October 1974 and involved the loss of 32 human lives. This inquest is being held up because some of the witnesses have refused to appear. Can the minister explain to the House why the employees of PanArctic Oil Limited are refusing to appear before the inquest? Does the minister plan to intervene to ensure that the witnesses will appear so that the jury can come to a satisfactory and just conclusion on this disaster?

Hon. Judd Buchanan (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that at no time did PanArctic instruct its employees not to attend this inquiry. I have indicated to the president that it would be my wish that they would appear, but certainly this is a decision that has been taken by them and not by me.