

[Translation]

AIR CANADA

BILINGUALISM PRINCIPLES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Transport, who, in speaking to the Association des gens de l'air, apparently promised to keep the pilot training centre in Montreal and also ensure that Air Canada personnel would always reflect Canada's linguistic reality. Mr. Speaker, my question is as follows: Has the Minister given Air Canada specific instructions, in writing? If so, does he intend to table them in the House? If the answer is no, how does the Minister intend to make sure that his promise materializes?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, Saturday evening we announced in Quebec City that we expected Air Canada to act in accordance with the principles that apply with respect to bilingualism within the corporation in terms of reflecting the percentage of Francophones in this country. We have also asked the corporation to take the principle of bilingualism into account in training pilots and personnel at the Montreal centre. To date we have given no instructions, and it is not up to us to give Air Canada written instructions in this respect. I believe the corporation has taken note of the comments and observations of the Department of Transport. Eventually, we intend to take steps that will prove to be at least as useful as those taken by the former government to apply the same kind of policy.

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AIR TRANSPORT

QUEBEC—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of State for Transport is supposed to have a special mandate for dealing with issues that concern Quebec. I would like to know what he has done and exactly what he intends to do to ensure that Montreal becomes once again a major centre for international transportation.

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to point out to the Hon. Member that I have no specific mandate for Quebec issues. The Minister of Transport and myself share the various issues that concern the Department.

As for the Hon. Member's question, it is not up to the Government of Canada to determine whether Montreal or Toronto or any other city should be what he refers to as the major transportation centre. The present focus of Canada's economy has put the majority of the corporation's operations in Toronto, and it is with this in mind that the corporation is managing its operations. Should the economic situation

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change, the company's policy will change with it. However, I would like to repeat that it is not up to the Government of Canada to determine whether Montreal, or Toronto, for that matter, should be the transportation capital.

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[English]

AGRICULTURE

SUGAR-BEET INDUSTRY—GOVERNMENT DECISION

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board. As the Minister knows, there are over 1,500 sugar beet growers in the country, and for the first time in over 15 years producers from Quebec, Manitoba, and Alberta are working together, in contrast to what happened under the previous Government which used to split those growers apart.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is there a question?

Mr. Thacker: Will the Minister assure those growers that the Cabinet will take a decision this week?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, we have the answer. We have had questions from all sides of the House. This morning I had a chance to meet with the representatives and I realized that since growers, Members of provincial Legislatures, and members of Chambers of Commerce are involved, this sector represents a broad spectrum of the economy. There are people representing labour who are interested as well. I would like to assure the Hon. Member that we will take everyone's point of view into account when we arrive at a decision, and we will do it as quickly as we possibly can.

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● (1500)

MULTICULTURALISM

FUNDING OF ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Ernie Epp (Thunder Bay-Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Multiculturalism. The Intercultural Communications Program is recognized by his Department as providing support for multicultural organizations that undertake activities which are designed to increase intercultural understanding, especially in the smaller cities of Canada.

Funding in the Ontario region has been tight for some time, but officials of the Department have assured organizations that the level would not be cut back this year. However, suddenly, in the last several days it seems clear that there has been a reduction. During this week when the Constitution's equality provisions are coming into effect, will the Minister