

Oral Questions

● (1440)

REASON FOR CHANGE

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, I will tell the Minister what I have in my hand. Will the Minister not admit that the real reason they changed their minds and the Minister approved the application was a threat by the Minister of Justice that "Air Canada had better conduct transatlantic flights from St. John's or there's going to be trouble for someone"? Was that not the real reason for the change of mind by Air Canada? The Minister knows it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I know the Hon. Member will not like this answer, but the real reason is that Air Canada requested the move, and we responded in a positive fashion.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Oh, come on, Maz.

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CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

SIGNING OF PETITIONS BY SPOUSES OF SERVING PERSONNEL

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Associate Minister of National Defence. Could he tell the House why the spouses of present Armed Forces personnel are being bullied by the Defence Department not to sign petitions which protest recent UI changes?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Associate Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member knows, in keeping with the long-standing and well-founded tradition of not involving the military in political activities, base commanders have quite properly interpreted Queen's Regulations and Rules to mean that political activity of this sort is not proper on military bases.

Mr. Broadbent: For their spouses!

RIGHTS OF SPOUSES

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. Is it the Government's position that the spouses of Armed Forces personnel are restricted in the exercise of their rights by virtue of marriage? Is that what he is saying?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Associate Minister of National Defence): Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Oh?

Mr. Andre: Absolutely not. The question is on military bases and political activity on military bases.

Mr. Rodriguez: Where else should their spouses live?

Mr. Andre: Perhaps the Hon. Member feels that it is appropriate to have the military involved in political activity. We do not, in keeping with long-standing tradition, and base commanders are simply enforcing the rules.

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ROAD SAFETY

SCHOOL BUS EQUIPMENT AND STANDARDS

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the best Minister of Transport Canada has ever had.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Next, next!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Question, please.

Mr. Taylor: What part does the federal Government play with regard to the safety of equipment on school buses which carry Canada's greatest treasure, namely, our girls and boys? Is any co-ordination being carried out leading to uniformity in equipment and operations in the provinces?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for that question. I like those kinds of questions, especially the preamble. Perhaps George may not agree.

Mr. Hees: You can't win them all.

Mr. Mazankowski: To answer the question, yes, Transport Canada provides the design, manufacturing and functioning standards for school buses in Canada. There are some 35 standards. They are monitored and inspected on a regular basis by the Transport Canada Road Safety Directorate. As far as provincial safety equipment is concerned, that is co-ordinated under the CCMTA, an organization of which I am sure the Hon. Member is aware.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

REPORTED INVESTIGATION OF CONTRACTING PRACTICES IN CONSTRUCTION OF MUSEUM OF MAN

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Minister of Public Works. Could the Minister confirm that a criminal investigation has been undertaken by the RCMP concerning the contracting practices of his Department in the construction of the Museum of Man in Hull, and will he indicate to the House the nature of the investigation?