

Oral Questions

equipment in order to save lives, and finally, is the Minister going to stop fooling around?

● (1500)

[English]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member's hypocrisy is really quite odious. He has been a Member here for a number of years. This bridge has been there for a number of years—

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure the Hon. Minister would want to put his remarks in another way.

Mr. de Corneille: Withdraw.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure the Hon. Minister will.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, I want to put my question whatever way you feel—

Mr. Gauthier: It is an answer.

Mr. Crosbie: I want to put my answer whatever way you feel is best, and I will withdraw anything which might arouse the Hon. Member.

The position is that that bridge has been there for many years. For the first time some action has been taken to look into the conditions on the bridge. A report has been done. We have the report. They recommend certain changes which will cost at least \$5.3 million over three years for the two bridges. That has been looked at with the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority.

Action will be taken. The hon. gentleman can relax secure in the knowledge that we are well aware of this problem and are acting to do something about it, where he failed to do anything in his years in the House while he was in government.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION OF ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION AGAINST FRANCOPHONES WHO FAIL ENGLISH COURSES

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for official languages. According to a report by the CBC, francophones are being discriminated against at the Department of National Defence.

Could the President of the Treasury Board confirm that such discrimination is taking place? I am referring to a situation where francophones who fail English courses have a note to that effect in their file, while anglophones who fail French courses do not get the same treatment.

Is this true? And what is the Minister going to do to eliminate this kind of discrimination?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have been informed of the troubling report broadcast last night by the CBC. Early this morning I called in the Minister of National Defence to discuss the matter. It is now being investigated, and I intend to report to the House in greater detail, at the appropriate time.

If it is true, it is entirely unacceptable and goes against the most fundamental policies of this House and this country.

[English]

REQUEST FOR EXAMINATION OF DEPARTMENT'S MANUALS

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the remarks of the Prime Minister on this important matter. Could he confirm that there will be an examination of the manuals, which according to the report have in effect required this discrimination, so that there will be no remaining discrimination in them?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have had that assurance from the Minister of National Defence who will be conducting a comprehensive inquiry to make sure that the criteria raised by my hon. friend are indeed respected, that the spirit and the letter of that law which governs our national conduct are fully respected at all times.

Mr. Speaker: I should advise Hon. Members that I will recognize the Hon. Member for Mount Royal and the Hon. Member for Swift Current—Maple Creek, and that will end Question Period.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

KURT WALDHEIM—UNITED NATIONS' RETIREMENT ALLOWANCE

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, the timing of the resurfacing of the Kurt Waldheim issue is quite ironic. This last Sunday thousands of people around the world joined in non-denominational memorial services to mark the remembrance of the most heinous of genocidal crimes, the Holocaust.

My question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Since Mr. Waldheim's activities are contrary to the very heart and purpose of the United Nations, and since his \$81,650 retirement allowance is an optional appropriation of the General Assembly, will the Minister act on my previous request to raise the issue at the United Nations and vote against the payment of this allowance?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we are raising the matter at the United