

Oral Questions

us whether he discussed the matter with the CN authorities and whether he favours their decision?

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there have been ongoing discussions among some of our officials and the Canadian National Railways and also with the city of Montreal. In general, the problem which faces the railways is the significant loss on commuter services, and in our view the problem is essentially one to be dealt with by provincial and municipal authorities.

[Translation]

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the right hon. Prime Minister.

I think he will understand the meaning of my question because we now have legislation on controls. An agency created by the government is endorsing a 25 per cent rate increase. Is the Prime Minister prepared to urge the commission not to allow increases in excess of 10 per cent, as provided in Bill C-73?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have little to add to what the Minister of Transport has just told to the House. The hon. member is certainly aware that the matter was discussed last week when the Minister of Finance met the finance ministers of the provinces. We tried to establish together a plan which would enable the government to fight inflation as much as possible while ensuring that the taxpayers would bear their fair share of the burden. To my knowledge, the regulation on agencies and Crown corporations is not published. I think it will be issued very soon.

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AIR TRANSPORT**THE USE OF FRENCH IN AIR-TO-GROUND COMMUNICATIONS IN QUEBEC**

Mr. Serge Joyal (Maisonneuve-Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, I wish to put a question to the Minister of Transport.

In the answers he gave the House of Commons last November 21 and yesterday, December 9, following questions about the use of French in airports, the minister said that a committee of his department was reviewing the implications of the use of French in airports. Can the minister tell the House today when the committee will submit its report, what are the names of the members of that committee and whether French-speaking controllers are represented on that committee?

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there was a committee which had representation from all sides, including the French-speaking controllers, that made very little progress before discontinuing its work because of some confrontation between the parties represented. What has been going on since is that within our department we have been meeting the various people interested with a view to making progress in respect of the safe use of the two languages in differing circumstances. In the case of air traffic and air traffic control, I will

[Mr. La Salle.]

expect a series of reports rather than a specific report in order that we can make progress in a progressive manner.

An hon. Member: And that's a progressive answer.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**IMPRISONMENT OF SIX UKRAINIAN WOMEN BY RUSSIA—
GOVERNMENT ACTION TO PROTEST**

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister in the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and I want the question answered by the Prime Minister and not by a parliamentary secretary, because they have no knowledge of policy.

Some hon. Members: Shame, shame.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I ask this question in view of the fact that today is International Human Rights day, and that members of the Ukrainian peoples are gathered on Parliament Hill for the purpose of protesting the imprisonment of six women who have committed no offence other than having stated that the constitutions of the U.S.S.R. and the United Nations denies the imprisonment being imposed on these women in the U.S.S.R.

● (1440)

Having regard to the fact that representatives of the Ukrainian people brought this matter to the attention of the government on December 2 and asked that the question of the imprisonment of women who are political prisoners should be brought to the attention of the Third Committee debate at the UN, and since the matter was not raised, will the Prime Minister, because of the very great importance of this matter and its interest to hundreds of thousands of Canadians, and having regard to the provisions of the Helsinki pact, bring to the attention of the U.S.S.R. the injustice that is being perpetrated which denies those principles of the United Nations charter.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the question, of course, is an important one but it refers to certain dates and discussion in committee of a particular nature, and of such a nature indeed that the right hon. gentleman had to read his question because he was not too much aware of it himself. I think he will understand that if I refer this question to the parliamentary secretary, it would not be the intention to downgrade any member of this House particularly one as capable as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The capabilities—

Miss Monique Bégin (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order may I say to the right hon. gentleman opposite that I received the representatives of the Committee of Canadian Ukrainians some time ago. I do not recall the exact date. We discussed action and information in respect of the Canadian public on the question the right