

Oral Questions

Mr. Crowe who has now involved himself in major corporate positions involving submissions to the NEB which he headed a few months ago? Does he not think, as Prime Minister, that he should have a chat with Mr. Crowe urging him to step down in the public interest from the positions he has accepted?

Mr. Trudeau: Not so many months ago hon. members on the other side of the House generally were arguing that we should not have chats with people who held judicial or quasi-judicial positions.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

● (1422)

Mr. Trudeau: If the opposition wants to be fair at all on this, they will recall that following certain events concerning the judiciary we published guidelines for ourselves indicating in what way the ministry should be entitled to communicate with the judiciary, and that included the quasi-judiciary. At that time we made it quite clear that quasi-judicial officers were in a particular situation vis-à-vis the administration. Now we hear the opposition telling us this is only a fiction, that they are not quasi-judicial officers, that in some way they are the instrument of government policy. I tell the leader of the New Democratic Party that the consequences of this new policy of his is a very strange one indeed if he thinks that the National Energy Board is an emanation of government policy. He should revise his views on that.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: Read the act.

Mr. Broadbent: The Prime Minister has made his usual equation in carrying a logical point all the way to an absurd conclusion. It is not at all warranted by the facts. Would he answer the question? I put it to him for the third time. In the interests of the spirit of the guidelines, with specific reference to the National Energy Board—no other body in this instance—would he not think it appropriate, as Prime Minister, to recommend to Mr. Crowe that he step back from the positions he has accepted, which put him in my mind, unequivocally, in a conflict of interest position?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, that is the third time the same question has been asked. The answer is that the spirit of the guidelines and the letter of the guidelines does not apply to quasi-judicial officers. The government is prepared to advance in this field. As a matter of fact, we did look into it before publishing the guidelines, but then we thought it would be more compatible with the division of powers and the non-interference by the executive into the quasi-judicial branches that we not publish guidelines. I note the House now is taking the position that we should have. That is natural. They always take the counterposition to whatever the government does.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

[Mr. Broadbent.]

[Translation]

AIR CANADA**REQUEST FOR DETAILS OF ACCIDENT AT TORONTO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport.

At about 8:15 a.m. at a Toronto airport, an Air Canada DC-9 aircraft made an unfortunate crash which resulted in injuries to several passengers and the death of a few others. Is the minister in a position to tell the House whether he has been officially advised of the number of losses of life and also the main cause of that accident.

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have, of course, received preliminary reports about the incident and our investigating team is on the site. I hesitate to use specific figures until I have a further report both with regard to the causes of the accident and also with regard to the exact number of persons killed or injured. However, the report at this point does tend to indicate there were three persons killed and 43 injured.

[Translation]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question.

According to the news service, the aircraft had left the Ottawa airport for Winnipeg via Toronto. Was the minister told whether there were federal civil servants or parliamentary officials because another source, another radio station, suggested that among the victims there were parliamentary officials on the aircraft. Can the minister tell the House whether this is true?

[English]

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I do not have full information about passengers boarding in Toronto, but I am informed that only two of the passengers on the aircraft had boarded in Ottawa. They were not connected with parliament or the government in any direct employment capacity.

● (1427)

[Translation]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

Given the gravity of the situation and also given the fact that in 1970, if I remember correctly, another Air Canada aircraft was involved in an accident which caused the death of over 100 persons, can the Minister tell the House, in order to reassure Canadians about the safety of Air Canada aircraft, whether he will order an inquiry to identify the real causes of these two accidents? The causes of the first one may be known, but they were not reported, at least not in this morning's news. Can he do that to reassure Canadians about the safety of this