

my question was more specific. I asked whether the minister would become involved by asking senior officials of AECL to report to him on these matters, and to find out whether they are co-operating. Your Honour suggested to me that, in effect, I was asking the same question and that the minister had already answered it. I understand the rules are that the minister need not reply.

My submission to Your Honour is that I have asked different questions respecting a very important matter. The minister should have the right to respond, if he desires to do so, by giving the same answer; he has to stand on his record, or he can sit in his place, as he did during the course of questioning, and not answer at all. I should like clarification on whether I can ask these different, specific questions, although they are generally related. Your Honour's interpretation of the minister's answer is part of the decision on whether I could ask another question. That is the point of order. Your Honour seemed to be interpreting the fact that he had given an answer as co-operation. I suggest my question was something quite different.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member raises two points which he says are not differences with the ruling I have given. If not, I do not know what they are. He will have noticed that today I permitted repetition and quite generous extension of some of the restrictions that might have been imposed on the question period. For example, a series of questions was directed to the minister on whether he should resign. That question can, in most circumstances, be set aside as being argumentative in the first place. The question seemed to me to have a serious tone, however, and I permitted repetition of the question by two other members. I think that was a rather extraordinary extension, but the circumstances were extraordinary.

As the hon. member will realize, I do not like to use technical rules in the question period to interrupt questioning on a very important subject. The hon. member put a question and a supplementary. During the answer to the supplementary, the minister said he wanted to make it clear that he would co-operate and that AECL would co-operate. He used those very words. The purpose of the hon. member's second question was specifically to ask the minister, not what he had said in his first answer but whether he and AECL would co-operate in the investigation; and that is what the minister answered.

The hon. member used the same language in the third question. I think it is incumbent upon the Chair to make an interpretation, if there is a rule, as there is. This also gets into part of the point of order: since there is a rule which says that questions which have been answered cannot be asked again, the Chair must enforce that rule. If, as the hon. member is advocating, that ought not to be the case, it would require a change in our procedure. The hon. member is advocating that that ought not to be the case, and that hon. members ought to be permitted to repeat questions when they are not satisfied with the answers, and the minister should simply be allowed to refuse to answer or to stand on his record. That is not the practice of the House. As long as the practice of the House

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remains the way it is, when I hear repetition of a question that has just been answered I have to rule it out of order.

Regarding the incident of the statement of the Solicitor General on Wednesday, I intervened because the hon. member is entitled to deal with representations for which he is responsible with respect to responding to a statement by any minister at any time or, in using his privileges, to speak or to put questions to the House. But when the hon. member indicated, as he did that day, that consent came only from one side of the House, he involved the Chair and made a reflection on the ability of the Chair to make a judgment. That was an incorrect reference to the situation and to the decision I had made. I therefore intervened in the circumstances. But this happens rarely.

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● (1210)

TRANSPORT

TABLING OF REPORT OF COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO BILINGUAL AIR TRAFFIC SERVICE IN QUEBEC

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I should like, under Standing Order 41(2), to table, in both official languages, copies of the interim report of the commission of inquiry into bilingual air traffic service in Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have tabled the interim report of the commission of inquiry into bilingual air traffic service in the province of Quebec. I am equally pleased with the recommendations contained in this report, which have the full support of this government. It is a most significant document. Its recommendations and their subsequent implementation are a significant step toward resolving the issue of bilingual air communications in Quebec without jeopardizing air safety. The commission's report states as follows:

The evidence on record leads to the conclusion that operational efficiency will not be affected at the three locations where the introduction of bilingualism is recommended.

The commission also notes that to its knowledge—

There has never been an accident or incident in the province of Quebec that could in any way be said to be related to the use of the two official languages in air traffic control.

The commission's mandate is to examine the safety-related aspects of expanding bilingual air to ground communications in Quebec. It is obvious that the recommendations contained in this interim report are the result of thorough and lengthy examination of all the implications. It is the commission's recommendation, and the intention of this government, to immediately authorize air to ground communications for aircraft flying under visual flight rules at St. Hubert airport. In this aspect it is significant that the commission refers to an earlier study which found as follows:

The St. Hubert airport is one of the busiest general aviation airports in Canada and its operation is considered to be outstanding. The introduction of the French language, at the request of the pilots, will not degrade the safety of the operation and, in fact, is expected to enhance it because of the improved comprehension of pilot-controller communications.