

Oral Questions

• (1450)

[Translation]

CP RAIL

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux—Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

In addition to the loss of 710 jobs in Montreal, CP Rail's decision to move its headquarters will further diminish the city's position within Canada's transportation sector. The decision to move CP headquarters is a direct result of federal railway policies which, thanks to enormous subsidies and protected branch lines, have caused a shift in railway activity to Western Canada.

What does the Prime Minister intend to do to compensate for the jobs lost in Montreal as a direct result of federal policies that provide massive subsidies for the railways in Western Canada?

[English]

Mr. Joe Fontana (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, who is a member of the Standing Committee on Transport, will have a great opportunity for his party to get on the record to help this government build an efficient and affordable railway system in the country.

If he wants to ensure that we have good transportation he will support the government's Bill C-101, which will make it possible in Quebec and across the country to build short line railways and make sure that customers and shippers can move their goods in an efficient and affordable manner so that the country can continue to build on the export business.

What the Bloc Quebecois can do for the country is help us build a great transportation system.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux—Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question was directed to the Prime Minister, so I expected a member of the government to reply.

The Prime Minister said he wanted to deal with the real problems—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: My dear colleagues, as you know, when questions are put in the House, anyone on the government side may answer the question. I would ask the hon. member to put please his question right away.

Mr. Mercier: Mr. Speaker, I meant a member of cabinet.

The Prime Minister said he wanted to deal with the real problems, but the federal government is causing these problems with its discriminatory treatment of Montreal.

Now that CP Rail is leaving Montreal and Canadian Airlines International has stopped its operations at Mirabel, another consequence of railway policies, when is the Prime Minister going to take steps to make Montreal the focus of the transportation sector, which it has always been until now?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is all very well for the Bloc Quebecois to keep blaming the government, but perhaps they should take a good look in the mirror. Considering the kind of climate they created in Quebec during the past few years and the intolerance they have often shown towards minorities in Quebec, it is hardly surprising that right now, some people want to get out of Montreal.

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[English]

VIETNAM

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

On October 4 I asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs to raise with the Vietnamese government the case of nine religious, academic and cultural leaders then in prison in Vietnam. I am happy to say that two of these prisoners have now been released and they have arrived in North America.

Could the minister assure the House that he would continue the policy of quiet diplomacy on behalf of the remaining members of the group still in prison?

Hon. Raymond Chan (Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to respond to the hon. member that our foreign affairs minister was in Vietnam recently and made representations to his Vietnamese counterpart, the foreign affairs minister of Vietnam, and to the Prime Minister of Vietnam to encourage greater respect for human rights.

We are also seeking Vietnamese concurrence for a visit to Vietnam by Canadian Human Rights Commissioner Max Yalden to further develop dialogue in that area. Canada continues to voice concerns about the human rights situation in Vietnam in international fora.

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• (1455)

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Canadian Heritage has instructed the president of the CBC to come up with \$350 million in spending cuts. Today he is announcing that he will be \$120 million short in that department. There is no guarantee that the mandate committee report at the end of the month will give the president the scope to make the cuts he needs to make.