

Oral Questions

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will take notice of the question and bring it to the attention of the Minister of Finance.

* * *

[English]

TRANSPORT

ALLEGED PLANNED FREIGHT RATE INCREASE IN ATLANTIC PROVINCES BY CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS—REQUEST THAT MINISTER TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. It is based on a statement by Lorne Mitton of the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission to the effect that the CNR is planning a large freight rate increase and a change in demurrage rules which, according to Mr. Mitton, will cause undue hardship in Atlantic Canada. Has the minister been made aware of these deplorable proposals, and what steps has he in mind to forestall what would be the tenth freight rate increase in Atlantic Canada in the last four years?

● (1440)

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there was no general increase in freight rates in the Maritimes. There might be some specific increases. I can inquire and see to what extent there has been and make a report to the hon. gentleman some time this week.

Mr. Macquarrie: Regrettably there have been these freight rate increases which the minister will find in his files if he is not otherwise aware of them. Could I ask the minister whether this unpleasant matter was discussed at his recent meetings with the Atlantic premiers and whether from that summit meeting any pleasant news will develop?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, the whole problem of freight rates in the Maritimes was discussed with the premiers. I am awaiting some reaction from the premiers of the Atlantic provinces before we reach some kind of understanding.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Moncton who has a supplementary and then the hon. member for Assiniboia who has a supplementary to a previous question.

Mr. Charles H. Thomas (Moncton): My supplementary, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Transport. In view of the alarming development referred to the hon. member for Hillsborough, will the minister consult again with the Atlantic premiers to see if some other formula cannot be devised, rather simply adjusting freight rate subsidies, in order to arrive at some other form of assistance?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, this is what we have been discussing but unfortunately we have not reached any conclusion up to now. I hope we can find a formula so that the Atlantic provinces can compete with the other provinces on the Canadian market.

[Mr. Matte.]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON DEPARTMENT'S PLANS—REFERENCE OF ANNUAL REPORT TO COMMITTEE—PUBLICATION OF STUDIES

Mr. Bill Knight (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. In view of the fact the minister has travelled the length and breadth of the country for discussions with provincial governments, can the minister inform the House whether he is prepared to make a statement on motions outlining the kind of direction his department is going to take, or is he prepared to refer the latest report of his department to the Standing Committee on Regional Development so that we may be able to deal with this whole subject?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I am certainly more than pleased to arrange whatever appears to be the most appropriate technique for getting a full airing of the subject. I mentioned in answer to the hon. member for Nickel Belt that the working parties are now in the process of refining the original proposals that were made, and this should not take too long. When this is finished, then we can decide upon the best technique for getting a full airing of the matter either in the House or in committee.

Mr. Knight: In view of the fact that in dealing with this subject the Standing Committee on Regional Development and members of parliament have been concerned about the amount of information available to them as members interested in the subject, could the minister inform the House whether the studies done relating to the prairie region and other regions will be made public by his department or whether we will have to wait for hon. members to leak them to the press?

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, I have repeatedly said that I was quite prepared to make these studies public and so far as I know there is no lengthy impediment to that when the working parties complete their discussions with the provinces. The only reason they were not released earlier was that they did in fact form the basis of the discussions and it was quite inappropriate to give them out ahead of the provinces having received them.

* * *

HEALTH

REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION TO ENSURE ADDITIVES TO BREAD NOT INJURIOUS

Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the number of additives being put into bread to preserve its freshness, would the minister have his officials make an inquiry into the baking industry to ensure that these ingredients are not injurious to the health of the consumer?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I shall certainly look into this matter.