

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General):** That is under consideration. As the hon. member knows, the present law will expire in 1977, and this parliament will have to deal with the issue by then, so we will have to make a decision as to when such a bill or such a debate will take place.

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### TRANSPORT

#### CROWSNEST PASS RATES—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE NO CHANGE

**Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister. There have been very vague statements made by the Minister of Transport in which he said that there will not be any change in the Crowsnest Pass rate for 1975, but that he would not commit himself after that time. The minister responsible for the Wheat Board made statements in which he said that the "Crow" rate will remain as long as farmers want it. In view of these statements and other statements circulated by various levels of government and farm organizations, I would like to ask the Acting Prime Minister if he is prepared to give the government's unqualified commitment to the effect that the Crowsnest Pass rate will remain in force.

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I would want to see whether there is such a conflict as suggested by the hon. member. Certainly, we have no legislation in contemplation which would change the situation.

#### FREIGHT RATES—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON MINISTER'S INTERVENTION TO PREVENT INCREASES

**Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I will also direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister on the subject of freight rates. Last Tuesday the Minister of Transport said, in reply to my question about across-the-board increases in class freight rates effective next Monday, that he would get in touch with both railways that same day or the next day to see if what he said in Calgary was carried out. I would like to ask the Acting Prime Minister whether the minister did in fact get in touch with both railroads, whether the cabinet is aware of that response the railroads made and whether the railroads will see to it that what the minister said in Calgary is carried out in regard to across-the-board freight rate increases.

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport has not yet reported to his colleagues on the discussions he has had. I will inquire of him. It might be appropriate, however, that he report to the cabinet before any announcement in the House.

### Oral Questions

### EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

#### LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON POSSIBILITY OF AGREEMENT ON OBJECTIVES

**Mr. Hugh A. Anderson (Comox-Alberni):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of National Revenue, but first I would like to welcome him home after attending the Law of the Sea conference in Geneva.

Due to the vital interest of many Canadians in the Law of the Sea conference, can the minister advise the House whether in his opinion there will be any draft articles approved by the conference, and if not would the minister comment on whether he sees any appreciable progress toward achieving a consensus on establishing an international law for the world's oceans and seas?

**Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, one of the reports I received in Geneva concerned the very substantial work the hon. member for Comox-Alberni had performed as a member of the delegation.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Basford:** It is really too early to answer the hon. member's question in any definitive form. The Canadian delegation has been pressing and working very hard for the Canadian position at the conference. My colleague the Secretary of State for External Affairs will be present at the conference next week, and he will be able to report definitively at the time of the conclusion of the conference on how successful we have been.

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### HEALTH

#### POSSIBILITY OF FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL AGREEMENT ON INTERMEDIATE HEALTH CARE

**Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to a number of questions directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare earlier. Could the minister inform the House whether the conference of first ministers of health and welfare of the provinces addressed itself to the dilemma of the ever increasing cost of delivery and maintenance of acute hospital beds and other hospital services, and in light of that, has it been possible for the conference to reach a consensus on the need for a cost sharing program in the field of intermediate health care?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, again at the last conference of health ministers, I sent a copy of the press release to all hon. members and this has been fully reported by the press. The two levels of government agreed to make an intensive review of the various services as they exist now, to provide citizens with health services at a lower cost than the one imposed by institutions such as hospitals, which are certainly very expensive. Meetings of federal and provincial officials already took place during the last weeks, and a report is to be submitted for consideration of ministers next fall.