

Inquiries of the Ministry

AGRICULTURE

SUGAR BEETS—INQUIRY AS TO ASSISTANCE TO ONTARIO GROWERS

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Paul Martin (Essex East): May I ask the parliamentary secretary—the one from Ontario, I presume—to the Minister of Agriculture, in the latter's absence when we may expect an announcement from the government regarding the serious situation confronting the sugar beet industry, particularly that aspect which concerns the growers in southwestern Ontario.

Mr. L. E. Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I might state to the hon. member that this matter is under discussion and a definite answer will be provided very shortly.

TRANSPORTATION

ROYAL COMMISSION—INQUIRY AS TO PRESENTATION OF REPORT

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Laurier): May I direct a question to the Minister of Transport. Has he any recent information as to when the royal commission on transportation will be handing down its report?

Hon. Leon Balcer (Minister of Transport): There is no change in the date announced earlier in the house.

TRANSPORT

EASTERN NEWFOUNDLAND—INQUIRY AS TO BUILDING OF CAR FERRY

On the orders of the day:

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillin-gate): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could ask the Minister of Transport whether the government has yet reached a decision to build a car ferry for service to eastern Newfoundland, which matter was reported to be before treasury board in August of 1959.

Hon. Leon Balcer (Minister of Transport): To my knowledge a decision has not been reached yet.

THE BUDGET

SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

The house resumed, from Monday, January 16, consideration of the motion of Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Finance) that Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair for the house to go into committee of ways and means, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Benidickson.

a report that certain non-operating employees of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in the Revelstoke area who were laid off as a result of the threatened strike have not been re-employed.

I referred the question to the railway company, and the management have advised me as follows. When the grain handlers strike became effective on the Vancouver waterfront on November 8, it was necessary to make a reduction of certain employees on the Revelstoke division because of a considerable reduction in traffic. The strike continued until November 30. In addition there has been a general decline in traffic in that area. Also, with the advent of winter conditions, toward the end of November track forces were reduced and one extra gang was laid off.

Up to the present time traffic conditions on the Revelstoke division have not warranted the return to the service of additional staff. It is expected that very soon the extra gang that was laid off will be returned to the service for handling snow and, if traffic picks up, other positions will be restored.

The management add that no reductions were made that could be classed as due to the proposed non-ops strike and in contravention of the act of parliament passed in connection therewith.

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): May I ask a supplementary question. The minister's reply has to do with the grain handlers strike. My question had nothing to do with that; it had to do with the lay-offs which were made prior to the passage of Bill No. C-45. I wonder whether the minister would make further inquiries, since the information I have is to the effect that those employees were laid off in early December and not in November, which is the information he has given.

Mr. Balcer: As I have explained, Mr. Speaker, the grain handlers strike was one of the reasons for the various lay-offs in that area. There were also other conditions that brought about the lay-offs. I think I have covered the question in my answer.

Mr. Argue: I should like to ask a further supplementary question. Does the minister feel that the C.P.R. management have given him a correct assessment of the situation, or are they giving the minister the run-around with an erroneous statement?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I doubt if it is an administrative responsibility of the minister to express an opinion on the C.P.R. management.