

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Lang:** Mr. Speaker, following meetings with many farmers, including a group from the Holdfast-Dilke district and others concerned about specific lines, I asked the Prairie Rail Action Committee to make known more widely the criteria it is using. I am sure we will all be interested in looking at those before making a judgment upon them. I think that is the important first step.

● (1442)

Second, the Prairie Rail Action Committee is preparing to make a much more detailed analysis available to each area affected, about their reasoning and about all the factors involved, short only of those which were given to them in confidence by, for instance, the elevator companies.

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**INDUSTRY****INVESTMENT IN AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**

**Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the right hon. Prime Minister. The final communiqué of the first ministers' conference last February said that "federal and provincial governments will provide incentives and take measures to ensure the proportional share of the increasing investment in the new plant for the automotive industry takes place in Canada." Therefore, would the Prime Minister make the carrying out of this commitment one of his personal priorities as first minister of the federal Government of Canada?

In this connection, will he ensure that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce gets together with the treasurer of Ontario to establish an agreed on data base about the entire automotive industry; and to have the Ontario government begin to carry out its side of the commitment in the first ministers' communiqué; but, most important, carry out the priority federal side of the commitment, which must mean ensuring Canada has a fair share of not just investment but primarily of jobs and production; and finally, deal with disturbing indications of the transfer of production from some Canadian auto plants to those of their parent companies in the United States?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I take the hon. member's remarks to be more in the nature of a representation than a question. I should like to indicate to the hon. member that the government shares his concern. Not only the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce but other ministers, including the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, have been involved in negotiations to obtain, in effect, results in this area.

In this regard, I should tell my colleague and all members of the House that at three o'clock I will table my letter to the premiers, including Premier Davis who wrote to me on this subject. My letter followed up on the February conference and indicated the conclusions which had been reached collectively by the premiers and myself, and the various actions which

[Mr. Nystrom.]

have been taken and are being taken in this regard by the government. It will be tabled at three o'clock.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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**RAILWAYS****EXTENSION OF CROWSNEST PASS RATES—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

**Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. It relates to the important recommendations of the Hall commission on grain handling and rail line abandonment. I should like to ask the Minister of Transport a simple question. Is it the intention of the government to bring forward an extension of the Crowsnest rates in respect of finished products, or at least products of feed grain?

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, any such question would involve very enormous additional expenditure which obviously we could not begin to contemplate at this stage. Indeed, the earlier recommendation of the Hall commission, that we pay to the railways full compensation between the Crow rate and what it costs to move grain, may involve a cost in the order of \$200 million, including existing branch line subsidies. We have not been able to do that either, because of the present restraint period. However, we have done the very important thing of committing millions of dollars to rehabilitation. For every dollar being spent there, we will receive work, results and improvements in the lines.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Mr. Speaker, it is clear from the answer of the minister that either he misunderstands or has not read the recommendations or the full report of the Hall commission. With respect to my first question, I point out to the minister that the cost is estimated to be in the vicinity of \$35 million, even with inflation taken into consideration. Will the minister read the report, understand it and come forward with some reasonable proposition in respect of my first question?

**Mr. Lang:** Mr. Speaker, I must tell the hon. member that his view that \$35 million would do the job is quite wrong. I believe he would find that there would be an immediate insistence that any subsidy applied to rail shipment of meat and other products would be applied to trucking as well. Regardless of whatever logic the hon. member may apply, I do not believe he could say that the freight rate on meat moving 1,000 miles in the west could be much lower than a similar amount of meat moving 1,000 miles in the east. I have tried to be rather even-handed while helping the west significantly in many ways with regard to our policies. I hope the hon. member will speak to his colleague, the hon. member for Carleton-Charlotte, who already has criticized this government for doing too much for the west in transportation.