

Inquiries of the Ministry

the equalization plan, which the premier of Quebec denied categorically.

Could the Prime Minister clarify that situation and tell us whether the federal government and the province of Quebec have really reached an agreement on a formula to enlarge the equalization plan?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I cannot have said that there has been an agreement on the enlargement equalization plan in the sense proposed by the province of Quebec and by other provinces. I have said that in fact there has been—and that appears in the communiqué—an enlargement of \$18 million which will be added to the amounts subject to equalization, but it is following a technical review that we have improved the application of the system to a point.

Mr. Valade: I want to ask the Prime Minister a supplementary.

I would like to ask him whether a mere technical difficulty, or more basic principles, are involved in this discussion.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, there is one basic principle on which all provinces were in agreement—that the rich provinces should help the less privileged ones. Because of this principle, the province of Quebec received hundreds of millions of dollars under the equalization formula. It is asking for more, but the provinces which have to foot the bill say that too much money has been redistributed already.

The federal government improved the system, without, however, going as far as some of the poorer provinces would have wished. It still went much further than the Conservative government had planned to do in 1962. The 1967 formula is far more generous towards the poorer provinces.

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[English]

AIRPORTS

HAWKESBURY—ACTION TO REMOVE POSSIBLE SAFETY HAZARD CREATED BY CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

Mr. Jerry Pringle (Fraser Valley East): My question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Is the minister aware of the possible aviation safety hazard being created by Canadian National Railways at Hawkesbury airport and, if so, is he taking any action to correct the situation?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am aware of it. I have conveyed the problem to Canadian National. I understand they have met with the parties concerned but I am not sure whether they have reached any agreement.

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INQUIRY OF THE MINISTRY

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): I have two brief questions to direct to the Prime Minister which I hope he will treat candidly. Can the Prime Minister con-

[Mr. Valade.]

firm whether he has requested the resignation of the Minister of National Revenue?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Broadview.

• (3:00 p.m.)

Mr. Lundrigan: Perhaps the Prime Minister will answer this question candidly, Mr. Speaker. Can he confirm, in view of the—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member that it is not in order to ask a minister, or the Prime Minister, whether he will answer a question candidly. The hon. member has the floor in order to ask a question, not to make a speech.

Mr. Lundrigan: I will rephrase my question and ask the Prime Minister whether he will answer the following question. Can he confirm, in view of the conflict within cabinet, that unless there is a consolidation of opinion along his own defined lines he will resign his own position as Prime Minister and leader of the Liberal party?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Broadview. Order, please. I apologize to the hon. member for Broadview. I hope to be able to recognize him in a moment or so. The hon. member for Gander-Twillingate rises on a point of order.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, my question was asked in all sincerity—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lundrigan:—and I hope the Prime Minister, even if he does not want to answer, will be given an opportunity to indicate whether—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Even if the Prime Minister wanted to reply he could not do so because the question is certainly not in order.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

TORONTO—NEED FOR MORE EMPLOYEES AT HOLLY ST. OFFICE

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Labour. In view of the high unemployment rate and the hon. gentleman's desire to help solve this serious problem, is it his intention to employ more staff at the Holly Street branch of the Unemployment Insurance Commission in Toronto to help process claims rather than have the present employees work overtime three nights a week?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour): I shall inquire whether more people are needed at this branch. If such a need is obvious, I shall have no hesitation in recommending the appointment of additional staff.