

Inquiries of the Ministry

to spare the life of Jimmy Wilson, who has been sentenced to die on September 5 for robbing a white woman of \$1.95.

Mr. Speaker: I think the hon. member is trying to extend the jurisdiction of the ministry a little beyond what is warranted. I understand his question relates to something which has taken place in the United States.

Mr. Regier: What I am asking is whether the government intends to register a plea on behalf of this man.

Mr. Speaker: I must advise the hon. member that it is not any part of the public duty of the government to administer the criminal law of the United States.

FREIGHT RATESSTATEMENT ON PROGRESS OF FREIGHT
EQUALIZATION INQUIRY

On the orders of the day:

Hon. George H. Hees (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday last I replied to a question by the hon. member for Assiniboia regarding the progress being made in the equalization of freight rates. By way of a supplementary question the hon. member for Laurier asked if other classifications of rates will be equalized. As the house knows, equalization of class rates, which is the basic structure of freight rates in Canada, was accomplished with effect from March 1, 1955 by the transport board after extensive hearings and study.

On September 18, 1957, after further hearings and study, the board issued a judgment disposing of the equalization of the following commodity mileage scales to be effective January 1, 1958: Brick and tile; sand, gravel, crushed stone; clay, field stone, fuel wood; scrap iron or steel; fertilizer; ice; sawdust and shavings; horses; cattle; and potatoes.

In the months March to June of 1958 the board held hearings in Ottawa and in western Canada on commodity mileage rates covering coal and lumber and rates on fruits and vegetables. The board is now preparing its decisions in these cases. Further hearings are scheduled to commence in Ottawa on September 29 on cement, paper and paper articles, wood pulp and pulpwood, and on October 6 on 76 scales covering a variety of commodities, half of which are applicable in western Canada only and half in eastern Canada only.

It is hoped that the work following these hearings will be concluded by the board by or near the end of 1958. When this work has been completed the board considers that, except for individual cases arising by complaint, its work on equalization under order

in council P.C. 1487 and pursuant to section 336 of the Railway Act will have been completed subject to further examination of rates on domestic grain, on which proceedings are necessarily in abeyance because of an appeal pending to the Supreme Court of Canada.

At the same time, the hon. member for Assiniboia asked if the hearings mentioned in my reply to his question would be held at various places or in Ottawa. The board advises me that the hearings scheduled for this fall on equalization are to be held in Ottawa. Hearings outside of Ottawa have already taken place in connection with the equalization of class rates and earlier in 1958 on certain commodity rates. No application has been received by the board for further hearings outside of Ottawa. Should the necessity for such hearings arise the board will, of course, arrange to hold them.

FINANCEGOLD—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON
GOVERNMENT POLICY

On the orders of the day:

Mr. M. W. Martin (Timmins): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. The question arises out of an article in this morning's *Gazette* by the financial editor, John Meyer, entitled "Higher Gold Price Empty Hope". The question is, in view of the vital interest of the gold mining communities at the present time in this question, could the minister inform the house if he favours the broader use of existing world monetary agencies rather than a higher price for gold as a solution to the problems of the gold mining industry?

Mr. Speaker: I am afraid the hon. member's question lies entirely within the realm of policy. I leave it to the minister to decide whether he feels it is one to be answered, but in my view it is not a proper question to ask.

HEALTH INSURANCEQUEBEC—INQUIRY AS TO INTENTION TO
PARTICIPATE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. P. Deschatelets (Maisonneuve-Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare before we reach his estimates. Would the minister tell us if he has received recently an indication from the government of the province of Quebec as to their intention to join in the hospitalization insurance scheme?

Hon. J. W. Monteith (Minister of National Health and Welfare): No, Mr. Speaker.