

TRANSPORT

ORDER OF COMMISSION RESPECTING HEALTH OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Charles H. Thomas (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to direct a question to the Minister of Transport but I do not see him here today. I thought the understanding was that his parliamentary secretary would be here to answer questions, but apparently he is not here either, so I will have to direct my question to the Prime Minister.

Is the Prime Minister aware of the delay on the part of the Canadian Transportation Commission, in that its railway transport committee has failed to rule as yet on the application of the Canadian railway labour executive, which made representations in January of this year in respect of a general order on the matter of health and sanitation as they relate to railway employees?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It seems to me that this is a general question of the type hon. members should put on the order paper.

Mr. Thomas (Moncton): With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian railway labour executive is meeting this day in Ottawa, and they have stated they have tried to get this answer from the government and have requested me to attempt to get an answer in the house.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

PROCEEDINGS AT DOMINION-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

On the orders of the day:

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs indicate whether the federal-provincial conference on consumer affairs will be open to the public or, failing that, to members of this house?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the federal-provincial conference called for October 28 is a meeting of federal and provincial officials. In line with the usual practice, this will be a closed meeting.

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Would the minister tell the house whether a decision has been reached in respect of setting up a committee on consumer affairs, since the standing committees of the house have now been constituted?

Mr. Basford: No.

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Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. McGrath: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister tell the house what committee of the house will deal with the important matters that come under his jurisdiction?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, that is really a question for the house leader. I believe it is going to be the economic and social committee.

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. Would the Prime Minister have the white paper on prices and costs, which he promised on September 13, brought down in time for this meeting?

Right Hon. P.-E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): The white paper is not ready yet, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McGrath: A further supplementary question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Mr. Speaker. Will he now tell the house when the special consumers' council will be set up? He has been putting off this question since the house opened.

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, I take it that the hon. member meant to refer to the council by its correct name, which is the consumer advisory council. I have been saying that I hoped to appoint it shortly, and I meant that. I hoped to appoint it far earlier. My problem is that there are about 200 people in Canada who would make a tremendous contribution to the council and I am having some difficulty in reducing this number to manageable proportions.

Mr. Ed Schreyer (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. After establishing the consumer advisory council will the minister refer to it the subject matter of price increases of automobiles, repair parts and safety devices in automobiles?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, the consumer advisory council is an advisory council independent of the minister and the department. The work it will do is really a matter for decision by the chairman and the members of his council. I am not in a position to direct it to do any work.

Mr. Schreyer: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. That being so, could the minister say whether he has referred or will refer this subject matter to anyone?