

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I will try to answer the number of issues raised by the right hon. member as quickly as I can. The short answer is yes. There are hearing procedures and people can file objections, so that there will be an opportunity for a full venting of this particular issue.

On the matter of historic sites, we have made arrangements and I have given instructions that every effort be made, and I think it can be made, to preserve all of these. In many cases, people whose land is expropriated will not necessarily have to move from that land, and we are prepared to put it on a lease-back basis to them until such time as it is needed. All of these facts will emerge over the next few weeks. Since the right hon. member lived in that area we might even find that spot and make it a historic site as well.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: It so happens that the school in question at which my father taught is just outside the area. I would ask the minister whether, even though provision is made for objections to be raised, any attention will be paid to the objections or will it merely be a formality? Second, because of the many other available sites that would not entail the destruction of valuable farmland, would the minister table the list of the 50 or so areas to which consideration was given before the final decision was made, and will he let the House know what were the last three areas from which the choice of Pickering township was finally made?

Mr. Jamieson: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I do not know about the 52 sites. I think that would be a very big job for assessment, even for the right hon. member. But what I have said is that we will make available all of the relevant data—and I use that in the broadest sense of the word—so that people will know the basis on which the decision was made. I should also point out, of course, that it was made in conjunction with the government of Ontario which also has plans for that area and is in fact covering a larger portion of property than ourselves.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, the fact that the two governments joined does not make it any better or any worse, and I do not excuse it on that basis.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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NORTHERN AFFAIRS

REPORT BY DR. USHER—REQUEST THAT MINISTER APOLOGIZE FOR COMMENTS

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development based on a personal attack made by him on one of his employees, Dr. Usher, in connection with the Banks Island report that was produced. Is the minister prepared to accede to the request of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada and apologize publicly to Dr. Usher and concede that the remarks were inappropriate?

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, my reputation is fairly well established and I have only said what I really thought. That document was published at the request of Dr. Usher who was attacking the government. Obviously, he could expect me to reply, because I do not usually let myself be attacked without defending myself.

[English]

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: Will the minister at least concede that his description of Dr. Usher's conclusions as being stupid was wrong and that it was indeed not a shabby piece of research as the minister alleged?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I read this report and, on being asked what I thought of it, I answered with my well-known frankness.

[English]

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Hon. members who were in the House yesterday will remember that the Chair undertook to try to give an opportunity to ask questions to members in the fourth and fifth rows who were left by the wayside during the question period yesterday. I would hope I would get the co-operation of hon. members in that respect. I always find it a little difficult not to give some priority to the frontbenchers and to the second row frontbenchers. This is why I am seeking their co-operation in giving the Chair an opportunity to see members in the third, fourth and fifth rows.

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TRANSPORT

REQUEST FOR GENERAL REVIEW OF RAILWAY MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES IN LIGHT OF ACCIDENTS

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. In view of the recent numerous and serious accidents on this country's railways, which have not been confined to any particular locale, would the minister consider having a general review undertaken of the maintenance procedures of this country's major railways?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): I thank hon. members for their applause.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Fairweather: Joey Smallwood has left.

Mr. Jamieson: Such a review has already been undertaken and, as I recall, there are three separate reviews. The most comprehensive one by the Canadian Transport Commission is, I understand, just about ready for tabling,