

Oral Questions

served by septic tanks. Nevertheless, the regulations may be overly rigid in some areas, and I am in the process of studying the policy at the present time to make certain it is realistic and that while maintaining the high standard which I am sure all members wish to maintain, it results in a little more freedom of action.

Mr. Blais: While it is good to learn the minister is reviewing the policy, can we encourage him to reach a decision before May 31?

Mr. Danson: I hope a decision will be made well before May 31.

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TRANSPORT**FREIGHT RATES—REQUEST FOR ACTION TO PREVENT INCREASES COMING INTO EFFECT ON MAY 5**

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister arising out of the 20 per cent across-the-board increase in class freight rates filed by the Canadian railways and due to come into effect on May 5? In view of the fact that on February 24 the Minister of Transport, along with four western provincial ministers of transport, announced that there had been a break-through with respect to this matter and that he—the federal minister—was opposed to this increase in rates, what action is the government taking to ensure that the commitment made by the federal Minister of Transport is carried out and that this increase in freight rates will not come into effect on May 5?

Mr. Joseph-Philippe Guay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): I will take that question as notice, Mr. Speaker, and get a reply for the hon. member.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Since the minister is not here, and since the Acting Prime Minister is not able to make any statement on government policy, may I ask the Acting Prime Minister whether he will assure the House that either he or the Minister of Transport will make a statement to the House within the next few days before this increase in freight rates comes into effect so that we may have some idea of what the policy of the government is, and whether or not the commitment made by the minister on February 24 is to be carried out?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): The Minister of Transport will be here tomorrow and I hope the hon. member will direct this inquiry to him. I am sure he will be prepared to answer it.

[Mr. Danson.]

LABOUR CONDITIONS**STRIKE OF LONGSHOREMEN IN QUEBEC—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO ENFORCE COMPLIANCE WITH BACK-TO-WORK LEGISLATION**

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, the House has been informed of the considerable damage being done by the continuation of the strike in the Port of Montreal. My question to the Minister of Labour is this: since only two of the 2500 Quebec longshoremen ordered back to work have decided to go back, thus disobeying the back-to-work legislation, is the government taking immediate action to make sure that the law is complied with in this instance?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, we are having officials of the Department of Justice examine the entire situation with a view to taking appropriate legal action.

Mr. Grafftey: Because of the gravity of the situation, will the minister inform the House precisely what action is contemplated? Will it be taken immediately? What specific action is contemplated to help the Quebec farmer whose supply of feedstuff is being shut off?

An hon. Member: You were not here when we discussed this.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): As to the question about the supply of grain, there is no doubt this is a grave situation; we intend to do whatever we can in that particular area. As to the first part of the hon. gentleman's question, legal action will be taken just as soon as we can.

Mr. Grafftey: Will the Minister of Justice elaborate on this aspect and tell the House what immediate action we can expect in an effort to remedy the situation?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): As hon. members may appreciate, in a case like this we will be investigating the facts and the application of the law to those facts with the object of taking whatever action we can to carry out the intention of the House as expressed in its recent enactment and, more particularly, to make sure that feed grains are made available to those who desire access to them in the terminal facilities.

STRIKE OF LONGSHOREMEN IN QUEBEC—INQUIRY WHETHER BACK-TO-WORK ORDERS ISSUED

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Has the government yet taken steps to seek a compliance order under the terms of the act which was passed the other night? While he is on his feet to reply, would the minister also tell us whether, to his knowledge, back-to-work orders by the companies or by MEA have, or have not, been issued?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): These dispatch orders were sent out last night in Montreal. The basis of the investigation is to determine whether or not there has been disobedience to the order. It is precisely the factual situation we are looking into now. Having established the fact, we intend to take the appropriate legal