

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I expect the Prime Minister will be in the house on Monday. I have not had definitive word from him in respect to a statement, but I am almost certain that he will making a statement on Monday which will include reference to the Commonwealth conference and his trip to the Vatican.

COMMUNICATIONS

BRIEFS IN OPPOSITION TO BELL TELEPHONE RATES INCREASE

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Postmaster General, but in his absence I will address it to the acting minister or the parliamentary secretary. In view of the fact that today is the last day for filing briefs opposing the proposed increase in rates by the Bell Telephone Company of Canada, has the government filed a brief and, if not, why not?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Postmaster General or the acting minister will be here on Monday to reply to that question. In the meantime I shall draw it to his attention.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

DISCUSSIONS ON STRATEGY AND PROCUREMENT

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Acting Minister of National Defence and ask him whether he would inform the house as to the purpose of the discussions that will be taking place during next week in Paris between the Canadian chief of the defence staff and the French chief of the joint staff, reportedly on matters of strategy and procurement, and specifically whether this has any connection with the review of Canadian defence policy and implies either Canadian procurement of supplies in France or joint procurement projects between France and Canada.

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether my hon. friend would agree to wait until the minister is back in his place. I think he will be back some time early next week, if I am not mistaken, and he will have a chance to answer this question at that time.

Mr. MacLean: Mr. Speaker, that is quite agreeable if the Acting Prime Minister will

Inquiries of the Ministry

bring my question to the attention of the minister.

[Translation]

INCOME TAX

INQUIRY AS TO SOCIAL PROGRESS LEVY

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question to the Minister of Finance.

Has he received any favourable comments since the social development tax has been implemented?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member should put this question on the order paper.

[English]

GRAIN

CANADIAN BOX CARS ON U.S. RAILWAYS

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Transport. In view of the great demand for grain cars in western Canada for the movement of grain, and in view of the fact that the president of the Canadian Transport Commission on November 28 said that the transport committee will be looking into the number of Canadian box cars on United States lines, could the minister say whether there is any unduly large numbers of Canadian cars on U.S. railroads?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of Transport): There are a considerable number, Mr. Speaker. I think this will be reflected in an answer to a written question which will be tabled next week. In addition to this I might add that most of the box cars in the United States are not those that would be suitable for the movement of grain. It is necessary to have both sets of figures, and I hope that both sets can be produced.

Mr. Skoberg: May I ask the minister an additional question. Has he made the Canadian Transport Commission aware of the situation, and is he instructing them to look into the situation at all times?

Mr. Hellyer: Yes, Mr. Speaker, they are very much aware. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is also in constant communication with them and we have undertaken, in effect, to do anything that it is felt is required to assist in the movement of grain.