

Oral Questions

whether a commissioner will be appointed should more properly be directed to the Minister of Labour. I understand that is the essence of that particular meeting.

If the hon. member is referring to what we are going to do with respect to White Pass in terms of the very sizeable capital investment which will be required to keep the railway in fit shape, I had detailed discussions on that matter with Mr. Pearson and the Yukon government in the last couple of days. He is aware of the situation, namely, that we have had our offer on the table for some time and so has the Yukon government, and jointly have committed ourselves. We are waiting for some word from Alaska, which as the hon. member knows has a great interest in this matter and some vested interest as well. Many Americans are employees of that railway. The indication is that they would be prepared to make an investment also, but nothing definite has evolved. We hope that, because of a change in the political situation there in the last few weeks, they will now give their attention to the matter and indicate whether they are prepared to participate in this capital infusion along with ourselves and the Yukon government. As the hon. member well knows, we are looking for Cyprus-Anvil to have some input as well. I hope the whole thing will come together in the next month or six weeks.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, I have a very brief supplementary. My information, of which I do not vouch for the accuracy, is that the meeting called for tomorrow morning includes the wives of the railway employees. I wonder if the minister's information is the same, because it appears rather odd to me that the wives would be invited to a meeting to settle a labour dispute. We will all rest easier, of course, if the minister can assure us that the railway will not be closed and that he expects to find a solution very shortly to the real problems confronting the railway.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, the railway is functioning; what is needed are improvements. Certainly that is our intent. It is essential to the Yukon that it continue to function and that it have this enrichment we are talking about. There may be concern expressed at this meeting with respect to the future of White Pass, but I think the labour dispute is of some considerable concern. I was happy to note, and I hope it is accurate, that Cyprus itself has indicated some willingness to afford employment opportunities to those who may be laid off. Naturally, I hope that will not be necessary.

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CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

RADIO-CANADA JOURNALISTS DISPUTE—INQUIRY RESPECTING RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Communications in his responsibilities for reporting to the House on behalf of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Since Radio-Canada journalists have been without a contract for almost a year now, have been on strike since October 30, a strike incidentally

supported by politicians of the three major parties in that province, and since the CBC has declined even to meet with the union since the strike started, does the minister intend to use his good offices to get the parties together again to settle this issue which has been depriving Francophones of news and public affairs programs since the strike began?

[Translation]

Hon. Francis Fox (Secretary of State and Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question concerning the present strike by Radio-Canada reporters. The hon. member wishes to know when negotiations might resume. I am pleased to advise him that CBC management spokesmen have informed me this morning of their intention to meet today with union members to determine whether negotiations might resume with a view to achieving a new collective agreement.

[English]

Mr. Rose: May I ask the minister if he has any more information about the meeting and whether the CBC is ready to depart from its Bob Cratchit offer of 7 per cent and 7½ per cent—

Mr. Knowles: Scrooge.

Mr. Rose: Is it Scrooge? I am sorry. It is the journalists who are the Bob Cratchits! Seven per cent and 7½ per cent over a two-year contract fails even to keep up with inflation. In addition, is the CBC prepared to discuss or negotiate improving working conditions and hours of work for those journalists, not only in the province of Quebec but for CBC journalists and other workers throughout Canada?

[Translation]

Mr. Fox: Madam Speaker, of course, it is CBC management which must take part in the negotiations aimed at a new collective agreement. I am informed by management that the initial position was based on the conciliation committee report which the union rejected. Nevertheless, Radio-Canada is prepared to sit down with the union in order to come to an agreement as quickly as possible.

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[English]

CROWN CORPORATIONS

LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE ANNUAL REPORTING

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Madam Speaker, my question deals with what I consider important reports which, in the opinion of many of us, have been gathering dust. I refer to the Lambert commission report and D'Avignon report. My question is addressed to the President of the Treasury Board. Is his department considering or contemplating legislation to control, force accountability and direct these Crown corporations to give us annual reports on how they manage public funds? If so, what stage has the consider-