

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, this is, first of all, obviously a matter of provincial responsibility. There are shortages in various specialities. My provincial colleagues have discussed this matter already with several of my colleagues, but a solution to the problem will take time.

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LABOUR RELATIONS

DISPUTE BETWEEN RAILWAYS AND NON-OPERATING UNIONS—AMOUNT OF INCREASE GRANTED TO MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. He may not yet be aware of the situation and may wish to take the question as notice. In view of the fact the railways offered a 5 per cent and 5 per cent increase during their negotiations with the non-operating railway unions, then broke off discussions and are now in the process of going to conciliation while in the last few days the railways have authorized an increase of 7 per cent to management personnel, would the minister inquire if this is correct? If so, what is the dollar and percentage amount that the railways have given to management personnel in view of the fact that this action would constitute bad faith in bargaining?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. gentleman knows, I do not like to take questions as notice so I shall answer right away. I am aware of this of course. I have followed the negotiations between the railways and the railway unions. They are now before a conciliation board, or eventually will be before a conciliation board. You know that with management it goes fast, that the board of directors decides what level of salaries management personnel are going to get, but in the field of labour they have to follow the law and under the law they have to go to the board of conciliation.

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[Translation]

COMMUNICATIONS

BELL CANADA RATE INCREASE APPLICATION—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. Minister of Transport.

As Bell Canada produces dividends and its branches make profits, and the company is requesting an increase in rates, does the minister intend to make a statement in the House concerning the planned increase in the rates of Bell Canada?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, first I thought it was Air Canada the hon. member was referring to, but if Bell Canada is the subject, I believe I shall make the same reply as I did to the hon. member for Vegreville. As far as rates are concerned, Bell Canada must abide by decisions of the Canadian Transport Com-

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mission, which reports to the Minister of Communications and not to the Minister of Transport.

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[English]

INFORMATION CANADA

DELAY IN TABLING ANNUAL REPORT—POSSIBLE DISBANDMENT OF AGENCY

Mr. Duncan M. Beattie (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Labour. As the purpose of Information Canada is to provide information for the public speedily, could the Minister inform the House why that agency's annual report to parliament is one year late?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will.

An hon. Member: This year or next?

Mr. Beattie (Hamilton Mountain): I have a supplementary for the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. Now that the House has shown its displeasure with Information Canada and in view of the determination of the Minister of Finance to reduce government expenditures on redundant services, will the government now listen to parliament and make preparations to disband the agency?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Davenport.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Is the right hon. Prime Minister rising on a point of order or question of privilege? I did not think that the question asked in those terms was in order and that is why I went immediately to the hon. member for Davenport. The hon. member for Davenport.

Mr. Nielsen: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Yukon is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Nielsen: With great respect, Mr. Speaker, surely members are entitled to know what the government's intentions are with respect to policy. The hon. member simply asked whether it is government policy to disband Information Canada.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member argues that the question is asked correctly from a procedural standpoint. The Chair thinks it is not. Hon. members can ask any questions they want, provided they do so within the well accepted practice. A question asked in those terms, according to my understanding of the rules—and I say this very humbly—is clearly out of order. The hon. member for Davenport.