

*Oral Questions*

legislation is indeed necessary—I think it is—will be introduced in the House?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, there have been various occasions in the past when the minister has obtained from the railway companies changes of position or new positions, which he obtained from them merely by talking to them in a nice, amiable way. In other cases legislation may perhaps be required, and if this happens we will introduce that legislation.

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**GRAIN**

**POSSIBILITY OF REDUCTION IN NUMBER OF ELEVATOR DELIVERY POINTS FOR FARMERS IF ENCOURAGED TO TRUCK THEIR GRAIN LONGER DISTANCES**

**Mr. Craig Stewart (Marquette):** Mr. Speaker, my question is along the same lines and concerns the transportation of grain in western Canada. It is directed to the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. Yesterday, in reply to the hon. member for Vegreville on the matter of the boxcar shortage in the movement of grain in western Canada, the minister stated, as reported on page 503 of *Hansard*:

We are looking at other means including the possibility of encouraging farmers to haul grain longer distances in their own trucks—

Did the minister mean by his reply that he is going to continue to pursue a policy of fewer grain elevator delivery points for farmers in western Canada?

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice):** No, Mr. Speaker. The issue at the moment is to try to find any means which will allow for the fast turnaround of available rail power and cars. It is true that certain rail lines allow for a much faster pickup, and therefore turnaround, or cars. In this kind of emergency situation, therefore, it might make sense—I stress the word “might”—to invite farmers, I assume with compensation, to move grain farther distances themselves in order to get this faster turnaround. This would be, of course, quite apart from any question of making this kind of program permanent.

**Mr. Stewart (Marquette):** A supplementary question—

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member will be recognized for one supplementary and then the Chair will see the hon. member for Victoria.

**DATE OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF LONG-TERM POLICY FOR MOVEMENT OF GRAIN**

**Mr. Craig Stewart (Marquette):** As the government has put a freeze on the closure of all branch lines until January 1, 1975, and as the CNR and CPR will not announce their plans for these branch lines until the government announces its long-term policy for the movement of western grain, when will the government be announcing its plans so that the farmers and the elevator companies will know what their future is on these branch lines?

[Mr. Rose.]

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, we have been undertaking a very important program of consultation with the producers and the various parts of the industry involved. The Canada Grains Council has a committee at work attempting to assist in this effort, all of which is designed to lead toward the goal of a policy that meets the needs and real interests of farmers and communities in western Canada. That is the objective. While I am as impatient as the hon. member to see the results of that consultation, the consultation is by no means complete and I am not able to forecast at this point when a decision can be made on the basis of complete consultation.

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**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**REQUEST FOR INQUIRY INTO COST OF NEW DDH-280 DESTROYERS**

**Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of National Defence my question will be directed to the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of the fact the government stated that the total cost of the four DDH-280 destroyers, including all components, would be \$170 million and the minister now states that the cost thus far, without all components, is \$287 million—and the end is not yet in sight—would the Prime Minister consider instituting an inquiry to determine why these ships will have a cost overrun in excess of \$30 million per ship?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I will gladly look into the matter and raise it with the Minister of National Defence.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Kootenay West on a supplementary.

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**GRAIN**

**USE OF PORT OF PRINCE RUPERT FOR EXPORT SHIPMENT**

**Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West):** Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to the previous question and is directed to the Minister of Justice in charge of the Wheat Board. In view of the fact that little grain has been directed to the port of Prince Rupert, with only 320 cars being unloaded in February of this year compared with 1,660 cars in February of last year, would the minister advise whether more grain will now be directed to that port in order to offset some of the grain shortage and relieve shipping congestion at Vancouver harbour?

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, the port of Prince Rupert is used whenever that does add to over-all handling capacity. Last year, as a result of the tremendous movement of grain, it was used very effectively indeed. The directing of grain is very often in the hands of the elevator companies that have received it and are moving it for cleaning purposes and is not controlled by anybody else. The Wheat Board can, of course, bring pressure to bear on them whenever they can show that some