

## Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

**Hon. Leon Balcer (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I have already received a request to that effect from Premier Stanfield of Nova Scotia. The matter has been under consideration for some time. I have passed along this request to the management of the Canadian National Railways, and no final decision has been arrived at yet.

**Mr. Argue:** I thank the minister for his reply. I have a supplementary question. Can I take it from the minister's reply that the government itself would have no objection to the C.N.R. taking this course? Can the minister say whether the government has a policy with regard to this four miles of railway line?

**Mr. Balcer:** Mr. Speaker, this is strictly a decision for the management of the C.N.R. As far as the government is concerned, we always try to do everything for the well-being of our fellow Canadians in any part of the country, and we will keep on doing that.

**Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillin-gate):** May I ask the Prime Minister a supplementary question. Can he say on what date the government abdicated its responsibility for the acquisition of capital assets by the C.N.R. and transferred it to the company?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. member is putting his question in the form of an assertion. I suppose he did not expect it to be answered.

## DOMINION-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

INQUIRY AS TO TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE  
WITH PREMIERS

On the orders of the day:

**Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillin-gate):** Mr. Speaker, I have another question that I should like to ask the Prime Minister. Is he in a position now to table the replies from the premiers to his letter, which he indicated some time ago he would do?

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister):** I have not yet received the consent of the premiers, but I will table them at the earliest possible date. I know the hon. gentleman wants to see the letters, and I would be very glad to let him see them before they are tabled here in a formal way. I can only table them, of course, with the consent of the premiers. If there is anything in them that the hon. member wants to see or that he has in his mind, having preinformation or otherwise, I will be glad to let him see them.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege affecting every hon. member in this house and the house itself, with respect to the reply which has just been given by the Prime Minister. These letters are in reply to a letter addressed to the premiers by the Prime Minister, with respect to which he did not feel it necessary to get any consent to have it published in this house before, in some instances and indeed as far as I can learn in all instances, it had even been received by the recipients. It was a public letter to which presumably public replies were made, and it does not seem to me appropriate that these replies should be offered to one member of the house and not to the whole house, nor does it appear to me that any consent is required.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, I have no hesitation in withdrawing the offer that I made a moment ago in a spirit of amity.

## SUPPLY

The house in committee of supply, Mr. Flynn in the chair.

DEPARTMENT OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION  
Indian affairs branch—

55. Administration, \$792,099.

**Mr. Howard:** There was only a moment or two available last evening to make a few brief comments on this matter following the opening statement of the minister. I wonder whether I might be allowed the opportunity to make one or two statements at this stage and pose some questions which might subsequently be answered by the minister, because—

**The Chairman:** Order. Will hon. members please lower their voices so that we may hear the hon. member for Skeena?

**Mr. Howard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I say, I would like to pose one or two questions early in the debate, for they may entail some compiling of statistical information, if only in a general way.

The minister made reference to the alterations which were made a few years ago in the welfare structure, and to the substitution of payment by voucher by payment in cash. The announcement was made in the house on March 5, 1959 with respect to the new standards of welfare. This information is contained in *Hansard* of that day. Five separate classes or groupings were established within which a person might fall in order to obtain certain levels of welfare payments. The standard rate was established on the basis of a single adult at \$22; then there were scales classified alphabetically as A, B, C, D, giving