

made pronouncements on the further development of the western coal fields. May I ask the minister if he is prepared to address himself to the subject of the eastern coal reserves, with particular reference to the opening of new coal mines on Cape Breton Island which would provide much needed employment?

Hon. Jack H. Horner (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I should like to send a copy of the speech I made at the coal conference to the hon. member. I dealt with the entire problem of coal development and exports. Certainly, I am aware of the problem with the deep mines in Nova Scotia and the strip mining, and I will encourage the development of both.

Mr. Muir: Mr. Speaker, since the minister has a rather strong voice in cabinet and as my former seat mate he is familiar with the problems we are confronted with on Cape Breton Island, would he assure the House that he will do his utmost to have the necessary funds allocated to the Cape Breton Development Corporation, thus enabling the corporation to open new coal mines which, as the minister said at the coal conference in Edmonton, would create additional employment and an additional source of energy for this country?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, my long association with the hon. member has made me very, very aware of the problems in Cape Breton. He can rest assured that his representation will be noted and remembered.

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FISHERIES

SWORDFISH—EFFORTS TO REGAIN UNITED STATES MARKET

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment. I am sorry he had to leave, but I will put it on the record and perhaps the minister would be prepared next week to give us a report on any progress being made to restore Nova Scotia swordfish to the American markets. I hope he is not asking for the support of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce who could only be expected to stick the front end of the fish into somebody important.

Mr. Hugh A. Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): Mr. Speaker, indeed I will take the representations made by the hon. member.

An hon. Member: About the fish?

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Why do you not ask the fish?

An hon. Member: Stick it.

Mr. Anderson: I will bring it to the minister's attention. It has been the policy of this government to give due consideration to all fishermen, not only on the east coast, but also on the west coast of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

TRANSPORT

DATE OF ESTABLISHMENT OF PRAIRIE RAIL AUTHORITY AND RATE PARITY FOR RAW AND PROCESSED PRODUCTS

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. Having regard to the fact that the Speech from the Throne referred in a broad general way to the problems of transportation, could I ask the minister specifically if we can expect any government initiatives in acting upon two of the major recommendations of the Hall report, namely, the establishment of the Prairie Rail Authority and any move by the government to introduce the application of the parity principle on freight rates for processed and raw products?

I ask this question in reference to the fact that this particular issue has placed a very severe hardship upon the rapeseed crushing industry in western Canada. The application of freight rates is very important to the continued viability of that industry in western Canada.

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the question of the creation of a Prairie Rail Authority is receiving very close attention within the government, and also we have asked the prairie rail action committee to give that item some priority in its own consideration. I will be having further discussions about the Prairie Rail Authority idea and the very many financial implications involved in it with various producer groups, as I have already begun to do.

In the meantime, we have provided \$100 million of new money to ensure that the rail rehabilitation program does get under way without any delay. In that way the maximum fiscal improvement which can take place is presently taking place in the prairie rail branch system. On the question of equity, this is a matter of serious concern to us, as we have expressed over the years our belief in the need for greater equity in freight rates between processed and unprocessed products. There are very significant financial implications. We have been discussing this with the provinces in an attempt to reach some rational conclusion about what processing should take place, because the natural advantage in the prairie region does take place there. At the same time there has been special action like the subsidy supporting rapeseed crushers in the movement of oil and meal. Also there is the special subsidy to pay for the differential in stopoff charges between eastern and western Canada. We have tried to minimize the problems in the interim period. We do recognize it, however, only as an interim measure.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, in spite of the fact that the minister has outlined certain initiatives which have been taken with respect to the further development of the rapeseed crushing industry, there is still much to be done with respect to the Prairie Rail Authority. Having regard to the fact that Judge Hall has indicated that the establishment of the Prairie Rail Authority is the key to the entire report of the Commission; and having regard to the fact that the provincial governments of western Canada have been less than satisfied with the