

Oral Questions

discussing that kind of question with the Prime Minister of Iran.

The hon. member knows that our finance minister is the head of the interim group under the IMF, so obviously this kind of discussion is going on. The only part of the question I cannot answer is in respect of whether the meetings should take place in Canada or elsewhere, if meetings were to take place.

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TRANSPORT

PROPOSED RETURN OF TRANSPORT COMMISSION, MARITIME COMMISSION AND HARBOURS BOARD TO DEPARTMENT'S JURISDICTION

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Prime Minister whether the government is giving consideration to moving the operations of the Canadian Transport Commission, the Canadian Maritime Commission and the National Harbours Board back under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transport and, by so doing, enable the government to once again direct these important operations, eliminating the chaos the Minister of Transport has described several times in this House?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am sure this is a very well thoughtout suggestion, and I will take a lot of time thinking about it.

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister is thinking I wonder if he would add this question to his thoughts. Is he not aware that the basic cause of the trouble is that the Chairman of the Canadian Transport Commission consistently ignores the Minister of Transport, thereby effectively taking the direction of transportation matters out of the hands of the government? As bad as this government is, this is causing chaos, as any member of the Department of Transport will tell you if you ask.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I must review my first answer a little bit. I now see by that statement that what I thought to be profound was actually very shallow indeed.

Mr. Hees: That is a fine, statesmanlike answer. Another bad day following a bad night.

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FINANCE

EFFECT OF REDUCED TARIFF ON BICYCLES ON INDUSTRY AT RIVERS, MANITOBA—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Craig Stewart (Marquette): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. As the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is spending over \$1.5 million annually on the training school for native people at the former Rivers air base, and as DREE has made large grants to locate the Sekine Bicycle Industry at this training school, making work available for native people, will the minister revise his decision to reduce the

[Mr. Trudeau.]

customs duty on imported bicycles from 25 per cent to 15 per cent as this could mean the closure of this large industry at Rivers?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have had discussions on this important question with the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. Careful study was made of representations of that company and others between the May 6 and November 18 budgets. We feel that the reduction in duty from 25 per cent to 15 per cent is reasonable in view of the fact that most of the parts are imported duty free, but we will continue to review the situation. There was a meeting on December 4 of officials of the department and representatives of the company at which time those representatives said that what was of immediate concern to them was not the budget cuts, but what was referred to as the dumping of bicycles on the Canadian market from abroad. We are looking into that aspect as well.

Mr. Stewart (Marquette): As the Sekine Company announced just prior to the budget an expansion program for its Rivers plant, which would have great benefits to the people of Manitoba, was the minister not advised by other government departments involved that his reduction in duty on imported bicycles could mean disaster for the plant at Rivers?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I would think the hon. gentleman is stating the matter in perhaps exaggerated terms. He ought to take into consideration also that the sales tax on bicycles was eliminated.

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AGRICULTURE

BEEF—REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO AID PRODUCERS

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Agriculture whether he is yet in the position to announce some new program to bring relief to the producers of beef and the beef industry generally in Canada, with special reference to the producers of grade B and C beef which is a byproduct of the dairy industry?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): No, Mr. Speaker, but I hope to be soon.

BEEF GRADING SYSTEM—REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION OF PRACTICES OF PACKING COMPANIES

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I would direct my supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture. During the exhaustive study of the beef marketing industry in Canada, which he promised the House and the country, will he also examine the government's beef grading system which is no longer being adhered to by packing companies? These companies are no longer buying according to the federal government's beef grades.

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we have an advisory group composed of people