

Oral Questions

tonne-mile. There is no obligation on the part of the railways now to deliver at that rate.

Mr. Benjamin: There is so.

Mr. Pepin: They cannot deliver at that rate. The most they are committed to is best effort.

The fixed rate is there. The fact that railways were not in a position to carry grain at that price is why the federal Government, for over a decade, has had to invest \$1.1 billion in the purchase of hopper cars, rehabilitating branch lines and so on.

I am saying that the regime which we will establish will provide much better protection to the farmers than they have now. I will demonstrate that ad nauseam in due course.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT IN RIMOUSKI, P.Q.

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport who, this past week, has been on a Liberal travelling caravan in the Province of Quebec. I want to ask him whether or not he in fact stated what is reported in *Le Soleil* of February 8, 1983. Did he state the following to an audience in Rimouski:

[Translation]

I quote:

Mr. Pepin made a slip when he called western protesters imbeciles.

[English]

I want to ask the Minister on behalf of my friends in western Canada, and in the Province of Quebec for that matter, if what the Minister has said is that people who are opposed to the Government's policies are imbeciles? Did the Minister, in fact, state that, and is this another policy of saying one thing in the Province of Quebec and another thing in Western Canada? Finally, I would ask him if he would come to western Canada and say that on a public stage?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I have recently been to western Canada for a number of days now, and what I was referring to was the gross exaggeration on both sides, on the western side as well as the eastern side.

If I may refer to what was said in the House yesterday on that subject, there is absolutely nothing in the publicity issued in Quebec that we are embarrassed about. My hon. friend from Vegreville made a mistake yesterday. I will call it a mistake. He did not quote the whole sentence. I will quote it in French for translation. What we said yesterday was:

[Translation]

The new policy will not give a marked advantage to pork and beef producers in Western Canada to compete against those of the East on their traditional markets.

[English]

That is quite different from what the Member for Vegreville said yesterday.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

DESCRIPTION OF OPPONENTS OF RATE CHANGE

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Madam Speaker, that is all very interesting. What I want to know is—and the Prime Minister smiles. He calls western Canadians uninformed.

Mr. Trudeau: No. I am saying it is interesting.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Will the Minister confirm or deny that he referred to people in western Canada who are opposed to his policy on the Crownsnest Pass rate as imbeciles, and would he be prepared to come out to a place like Delisle, Saskatchewan, and stand on a platform with me and repeat that statement to western Canadians?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I will repeat that those who have grossly exaggerated the effect of the policy, such as one farmer, for example, who said in the West that it would cost him \$25,000 more in the first year because of this policy when in fact it will cost him \$5,000 more in the fourth year, deserve the qualification—whichever one my hon. friend wants to take.

* * *

● (1500)

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES READJUSTMENT ACT

TABLING OF REPORT OF COMMISSION FOR THE PROVINCE OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, 1983

Madam Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Section 19 of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, Chapter E-2, Revised Statutes of Canada, 1970, to lay upon the Table a certified copy of the Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Prince Edward Island, 1983.

Pursuant to Standing Order 46(4), this Report is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

* * *

[Translation]

PETITIONS

MR. DOMM—BROADCASTING OF PORNOGRAPHIC FILMS

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has laid upon the Table the three hundred and eighty-ninth report of the Clerk of Petitions stating that he has examined the petition presented by the Hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm) on Wednesday, February 9, 1983, and finds that it meets the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.