

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: If the minister is satisfied that there is a question of urgency I will certainly allow him to answer the question.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, now the question has been asked I think there is some question of urgency. I would like to assure the hon. member and all hon. members of the house that there is a uniform price of \$40 a set to all comers, including the readers of *Reader's Digest*.

Mr. Langlois (Mégantic): Mr. Speaker, I rise now on my own point of order relating to the question I asked the Minister of Finance. I would gladly put my question on the order paper on one condition, namely that it is answered a little sooner than the one I have had there since October, addressed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a supplementary question of the right hon. Prime Minister concerning the question asked by the hon. member for Hastings-Frontenac. A week ago I put a question to the Prime Minister, in the absence of the Minister of Finance, concerning the price of these gold coins. The Prime Minister, as I recall, undertook to discuss the matter with the Minister of Finance. I was wondering whether this discussion has yet taken place, and if so what was the result.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I have been ready to answer this question for some time. The government of Canada, like other members of the International Monetary Fund, has an obligation to avoid taking any steps which would facilitate the speculative hoarding of gold, both nationally and internationally. The issuance of a special set of coins of the centennial year, including a \$20 gold piece, in the form of a presentation set, is not inconsistent with this objective. It is designed for collectors and will be purchased largely by collectors.

On the other hand, interest in single gold coins could extend beyond those who are concerned with the commemoration of our centennial. Their issuance might therefore be inconsistent with our international obligations.

Mr. Langlois (Mégantic): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. While we are on the centennial business, could the Minister of Finance inform the house whether the new centennial paper bills are only in the denomination of \$1, or are they of different denominations?

[Mr. Webb.]

Mr. Sharp: My understanding is that they are \$1 only, sir.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I regret to advise hon. members that the time for questions has now expired.

TRANSPORTATION

STATEMENT ON APPEAL FROM RULING BY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps before calling orders of the day I might remind hon. members, if it is necessary for me to do so, that a point of order was raised yesterday by way of appeal from a ruling of the chairman of committee of the whole. I have, of course, had an opportunity since yesterday of studying very closely the ruling of the Chair and arguments submitted by hon. members. Before rendering a ruling I am wondering whether the Minister of Transport has anything to add to the arguments he has already submitted in the course of the discussion.

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): I would like, sir, in addition to what I have already said to make a point which it seems to me would be relevant to the consideration of whether the amendment was in order. I was, of course, well aware of the various rules and standing orders to which hon. gentleman opposite referred. I do not contest the validity of any of them. As I indicated in my argument the other day, I was quite well aware that if I attempted to introduce the same proposition again it would be out of order. Before submitting an amendment, or perhaps I will have to say a purported amendment since it has been called into question, to the committee I felt it was my duty to apply myself to this problem to the best of my rather limited abilities.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

● (3:20 p.m.)

Mr. Pickersgill: I recognize that I do not have the long experience of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre nor the legal training of the hon. member for Bow River, to say nothing of the eloquence of the right hon. gentleman opposite, I think I can say, sir, I was aware that there did not seem to be any kind of amendment I could have offered to clause 50 which would be in order at all because it seemed to me that even to attempt to import into that clause, which dealt with grain rates, a review of rates on grain alone would quite obviously come so close to the line that I might very easily cross the line.