

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, normally I would have that information before a two o'clock question period, but this is Friday morning and I do not normally get it until later in the day. The only thing I can say in a general way is that the report is that the situation is improving but that there are still problems because of weather conditions.

DISCONTINUANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY ON PART OF CPR
FOR MAINTENANCE OF SIDING TRACKS AT GRAIN
ELEVATORS

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, as a further supplementary I would like to ask the Minister of Transport whether he has investigated or will undertake to investigate the situation whereby the CPR no longer accepts responsibility for maintaining rail trackage adjacent to elevators, in other words, railway sidings where elevators are located, in view of the change in its operations whereby the CPR no longer maintains section crews at regular intervals?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that I will be glad to look into the question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We will return to this interesting subject in a few moments but for now the Chair will recognize the hon. member for Compton.

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[Translation]

FINANCE

PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL OF GOVERNMENT FROM
TAXATION FIELD

Mr. Henry Latulippe (Compton): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the right hon. Prime Minister.

Since the government will probably be transferring certain fiscal benefits to the provinces, such as family allowances in the case of Quebec, could he tell us whether the government intends to withdraw from the fiscal field also to the same extent?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that is a very complex question. I could just say that, if the federal government were to withdraw from those areas, the have-not provinces could no longer enjoy the benefits they are now receiving and consequently social security in the well-to-do provinces would be adequate whereas the less well-to-do provinces, such as Quebec, for instance, could not have a social security system equal to that of the other provinces.

[Mr. Murta.]

[English]

POLLUTION

SASKATCHEWAN RIVER—NEGOTIATIONS WITH
MANITOBA GOVERNMENT ON ACTION

Mr. Robert Simpson (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. Can the minister say whether negotiations are continuing between his department and the authorities in the provincial government of Manitoba in relation to a pollution problem on the Saskatchewan River as a result of effluent from the Forest Products plant at The Pas, Manitoba, and, if so, what progress is being made?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, we have been in close contact with the government of Manitoba concerning the necessary plant needed to clean up the effluent from the Churchill Forest Products mill. The government of Manitoba knows what plant is required in order to make this clean-up possible. It is an expensive plant. It will take a while for them to finance its installation.

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FISHERIES

SWORDFISH—NEGOTIATIONS WITH WASHINGTON
RESPECTING RESTORATION OF MARKET

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment and Fisheries. It is the same as one taken under consideration by the Secretary of State for External Affairs earlier this week. Are active negotiations under way with the United States government regarding the possible reopening of that country to Canadian catches of swordfish and, if so, is the minister's staff in on these negotiations?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment and Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, there have been frequent discussions. Our staff has always been involved. However, the United States food and drug administration is still adamant. The standard is one-half part per million of mercury in fish. They are not allowing any shipments into the United States of fish from any country that exceed that level.

Mr. McCleave: I wish to ask one brief supplementary question. Is the minister's department still going to persist in seeking methods of continuing the dialogue on this very important matter?

Mr. Davis: Yes, and I might add that we are still trying to convince health authorities round the world that one-half part per million of mercury in fish is an extremely safe level and could be increased to one part.