

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Did the Canadian National take steps to inform the public of the nature of the train and the speeds it will travel at? I ask this question in the light of yesterday afternoon's accident.

Mr. Hellyer: The introduction of the train, Mr. Speaker, has been widely advertised. Actually the difference between the speed of the turbo train and the speed of conventional trains is not great. Many conventional trains run over the same route at approximately the top speed attained by the turbo train.

The major difference in operating time between the two cities lies in the rate of acceleration and deceleration, which depends on the weight of the train itself. So there is not very much difference in the operating requirements, although obviously a train running at high speed gives a shorter warning time before level crossings than does one running at a slower speed.

Mr. Baldwin: A profound observation.

OIL**STUDY OF DEVELOPMENTS IN ALASKA AND NORTHERN CANADA**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Yesterday I put a question to the Prime Minister on the subject of our petroleum industry. I asked him whether he was meeting with the Premier of Alberta and whether consideration was being given to setting up a special study with reference to new markets for Canadian petroleum. Has the right hon. gentleman met with the premier?

Right Hon. P.-E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I had a meeting with the premier this morning. He had requested an interview, and since it was not his expressed intention that the contents of it should be revealed, I prefer not to do so.

As to the second part of the question, the general subject of petroleum, may I say I have been discussing this with the officials and with the Acting Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Does my colleague have something to add?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Acting Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Before I saw the question asked by the hon. member yesterday I had already contacted the chairman of the National Energy Board and had a long conversation with him concerning the kind of

[Mr. Hellyer.]

studies which are taking place now in view of recent important developments in Alaska, in particular. He has given me the following report.

The tempo of exploration activities, particularly in the north, has greatly increased over the past few months and industry is actively engaged in numerous studies—

That is their interest.

—relating to possible alternative methods of transporting oil into various markets if its expectation of large, highly productive oil resources prove correct. The impact of these on United States markets now supplied with crude is also being studied by individual oil companies and by consultant and investment analysts. The National Energy Board—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I regret I must interrupt the minister, but it seems to me he is giving the type of information which ought to be given by way of a statement on motions.

Mr. Woolliams: I agree with your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but in view of the importance of this industry and the seriousness of the situation, I wonder whether the minister would be prepared to make a statement on motions tomorrow. I should also like to ask him whether anything has been done to provide a proper staff for the chairman or vice chairman of the energy board, since we were told in committee that they were short handed and lacking in funds with which to make the investigation.

Mr. Pepin: The President of the Treasury Board said a few days ago he was looking into this, and I impressed on him—it was not necessary but I did it anyway—the seriousness of the situation. With respect to the formation of the committee, I might say there is already an interdepartmental committee which brings together representatives of the National Energy Board and the various departments interested in this question of oil. As to the possibility of making a statement, I hope to make one at an early date.

TRADE**WHEAT—POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF EXPORT CREDIT POLICY**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): My question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Is the government considering extending its export credit policy to further increase wheat sales?