

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Stevens:** Mr. Speaker, as budget secrecy, certainly relative to tax changes or the spending plans of the government, is of uppermost importance, would the minister indicate what precise guidelines he has established to ensure continued secrecy of budgetary information as this is very much a pool effort behind the presentation of the budget.

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** Mr. Speaker, as I just said the discussion was not with regard to tax changes or government spending.

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**NATIONAL DEFENCE****REQUEST FOR DETAILS OF STUDENT SUMMER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM IN CAPE BRETON AND EXTENSION OF TIME LIMIT**

**Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. In view of the extremely serious unemployment rate on Cape Breton Island, would the minister announce as quickly as possible what programs will be available for students under the SEAP—the Student Summer Employment and Activities Program—in Cape Breton. I understand there are over 1,500 students in the Sydney district area alone registered for employment at the moment.

**Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence):** Yes, Mr. Speaker; I will make that information known to the hon. member.

**Mr. Muir:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. gentleman for his reply. I am wondering whether he would give consideration to extending the program under his department for more than eight weeks, so that at least a few students in every community on the Island would be given an opportunity to apply for some of these positions.

**Mr. Richardson:** Mr. Speaker, I can agree to look at that representation.

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**TRANSPORT****FREIGHT RATES—INCREASE OF AGREED CHARGES ON POTATOES—INADEQUACY OF ROLLING STOCK**

**Mr. Eymard Corbin (Madawaska-Victoria):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. In view of the fact that both the CN and the CP have served notice on New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island potato shippers that they intend to raise their agreed charge freight rates by 20 per cent on domestic shipments and 15 per cent on export shipments, as of July 1, would the Minister of Transport have a heart to heart talk with these servants of the national interest so as to convince them of the need for improved rolling stock to substitute for the antiquated and unacceptable railway cars now being provided by U.S. railways, when these are at all available, so that eastern potato growers can receive the same fair treatment accorded to the western wheat producer in this respect.

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I will be glad to raise the question of adequate equipment with the two railways. I perhaps should also make sure that the Canadian Transport Commission has taken note of the rate increase.

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**CONSUMER AFFAIRS****ALLEGED REFUSAL OF RENEWALS OF CAR INSURANCE UNLESS OTHER TYPES OF INSURANCE PLACED WITH FIRM**

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, if I could get the minister's attention. Would the minister tell the House if a number of officials in his department have been investigating what has been described as a flood of complaints about the practice by a number of insurance companies of refusing renewals of car insurance unless the person applying for insurance would also agree to place his fire and life insurance with the same company.

**Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the situation but have not been flooded with complaints.

**Mr. Broadbent:** Mr. Speaker, would the minister just answer the question. I asked him if his department is investigating this. I understand from reports that it is. If so, has he received a report from his officials and is he taking any action on this deplorable practice.

**Mr. Mackasey:** Mr. Speaker, as soon as I receive the report, if action is necessary I will be glad to take it. One of the limitations I find in my role as Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is the quasi-judicial role of the investigator in respect of the Combines Investigation Act means that even I am prohibited from knowing what actions are being taken, if any, unless they are revealed by a third party. This is an embarrassing position to be in because it is very difficult to be forthright with the House.

**Mr. Broadbent:** Mr. Speaker, if it should turn out that this practice does contravene existing law, which I understand is problematical, and since such a practice really amounts to the consumer being held up to blackmail by the insurance companies because presumably the consumer has other insurance with another company, would the minister take steps to ensure that the law is changed so that the government would be in a position to stop this practice.

**Mr. Mackasey:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. gentleman's representations are coming at a very appropriate time since the legislation is about to be changed. I certainly will give it full consideration.