

these days and explain how the pension accounts actually work.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Johnston:** I understood him to say in his preamble to the question that we were excluding 16,000 people of the PIPS group from attending this conference. The point is that my colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, has responded to that question. The conference is being sponsored by her department. I thought her answer made perfect sense, that the key players in this are the employer and employee groups who are the direct participants in this fund. I would be more than happy to receive any representations that PIPS has to make with respect to the government pension plan, as I have in the past from other groups. As the hon. member has pointed out, we are the employer and obviously we are concerned with their pension plans, and if they have specific representations I would be delighted to receive them myself.

#### SUBMISSION OF PIPS REPRESENTATIONS TO CONFERENCE

**Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Madam Speaker, the minister having said that he would be delighted to receive the representations, would he be prepared to give an undertaking to the House that he would take the representations to that conference as one of the employers?

**Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board):** Madam Speaker, the Treasury Board will be represented at that conference. The Treasury Board representatives at that conference—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Johnston:** I am sorry, Madam Speaker, additional questions are being asked at the same time—

**Mr. Clark:** Monique Bégin is answering for you.

**Madam Speaker:** If I may help the minister, he may simply answer the question that has been asked and not concern himself about those that are shouted across the floor.

**Mr. Clark:** Ask Monique Bégin, Don.

**Mr. Johnston:** We intend, as the largest employer in Canada, to put forward the point of view of Treasury Board.

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### RAILWAYS

#### CROWSNEST PASS RATE—CABINET POLICY

**Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Right Hon. Prime Minister. It concerns the question put by the hon. member for Provencher, and it is really supplementary to it. With regard to the speech given on Wednesday by the minister responsible for the Wheat Board in which he unequivocally supported the continuation of the

#### Oral Questions

Crowsnest freight rate, it is clear that the minister was speaking for cabinet when he made that policy statement that there will be no changes in the Crow rate?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Madam Speaker, I believe that that is the answer I gave a moment ago. At present there is no decision and no intention in cabinet to change the Crow rate. I understand that even the western premiers cannot agree on whether or not it should be changed. Apparently the province of Saskatchewan is opposed to any change. The other two prairie provinces want change.

• (1140)

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Trudeau:** Madam Speaker, I am being urged by the Tory party—and now by the NDP—to tell the west what is good for it in the area of grain transportation.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** God help us.

**Mr. Trudeau:** I think they would be the first to tell us that that is not the right approach.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Double-tracking.

**Mr. Trudeau:** At the present time our policy is not to touch the Crow rate, but if there is a general feeling in the west that the question must be reopened, then we would be happy to do so.

**Mr. Epp:** Will you do the same with the Constitution?

#### HALL REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert):** Madam Speaker, I like that statement except for "the present time" part of it. Regardless of the statements being made by the various ministers who are indulging in an attempt to establish public opinion across the west, there is a great deal of consensus among farmers that the Crowsnest freight rate should stay as is.

My supplementary question is for the Minister of Transport, but perhaps his parliamentary secretary, the hon. member for St. Boniface, could answer it. In its deliberations on the Crowsnest freight rate is the Department of Transport taking a good look at the recommendations in the report of Mr. Justice Emmett Hall on grain handling and transportation, and considering extending the Crow benefits to other products to alleviate some of the concerns of the people who are bothered by the level of Crow rates?

**Mr. Robert Bockstael (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Transport has been receiving delegations from various commodity representatives and groups interested in freight rates in the west. Their representations are being taken into consideration. At some future date the minister will be making recommendations to cabinet.