

*Oral Questions*

• (1450)

**NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS**

PRIME MINISTER'S ROLE AT WILLIAMSBURG SUMMIT

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Recently, in his answers to me in the House on May 18, and in his *Toronto Star* interview, the Prime Minister appears to be casting himself in the role of an honest broker or mediator between the United States and the Soviet Union. Is it his intention to push that role at the forthcoming Williamsburg Summit in the hope that the United States can be persuaded of his expertise in that direction, in spite of his public musings about the warlike propensities of President Reagan?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** No, Madam Speaker.

INVITATION TO PRIME MINISTER TO VISIT MOSCOW

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister will recognize, of course, the difference between the musings that he may have had in private with Mr. Gorbachev during his recent visit here and his public criticism of the President of the United States. Can he tell us whether the private stance that he took with Mr. Gorbachev was in any way responsible for the invitation that he received to visit Moscow, and while answering that could he say whether he intends to accept that invitation?

While he is still on his feet, might he also say whether he has received any indication with respect to the manner in which his statement about President Reagan's warlike propensities have been received in Washington?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Madam Speaker, there is a whole series of questions there and I am not sure that I can deal with them all. As far as the invitation to Moscow is concerned, it would please the Hon. Leader of the Opposition to know that most heads of Government or senior members of Government who come to Canada invite me to visit their countries, knowing full well that it will please the Opposition that I be absent some days from this place. So it is nothing new.

In the case of the Soviet Union, I think we have been receiving visits for at least the past half dozen years on the basis that the last bilateral exchange with the Soviet Union at the level of heads of Government was when Premier Kosygin came. That was almost ten years ago, if my memory is correct. It would normally be Canada's turn to visit the Soviet Union if one considers past records. I should not be surprised that the Right Hon. Member for Yellowhead (Mr. Clark), when he was Prime Minister, would also have been invited to the Soviet Union with as much urgency.

The other part of the question concerned my musings. I merely want to say that I am happy that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition finds them amusing.

PRIME MINISTER'S INTENTIONS

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, with respect to the Prime Minister's comments concerning the reaction of the Opposition, his inferential forthcoming visit to Moscow, and his statement that we would like to see him go from time to time, is he inferentially saying by that answer that he is threatening us with his return or promising that he will stay there?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Madam Speaker, that is a rather singular question, coming from a man who, we know, will no longer have his job in about three weeks from now.

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**CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS**

OFFER TO PURCHASE UNITED STATES RAILWAY

**Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Both Canadian railways are holding Canadian grain producers and taxpayers up to ransom by refusing to upgrade their rail systems unless they get more money from both. Even if they get five or six times the Crow rate, both railways have said they will not even buy hopper cars. They expect the taxpayers to do that.

In light of that, I wish to ask the Minister about Canadian National's bid of \$300 million to buy 3,100 miles of the bankrupt Milwaukee Road Railway's lines in the United States, and CNs offer to take on the \$180 million of debt owed by the Milwaukee Road to the United States Government. Why is he asking farmers and taxpayers to give CN and CP more money to rebuild rail lines in Canada when these companies apparently have enough resources to bail out American investors and the United States Treasury?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, with respect to the first part of the question, the adequacy of the compensation given to railways, I thought that this is one of the items of the Crow reform which was generally accepted in the West. In particular I remember a study made for the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool on the adequacy of the compensation, and the figure arrived at was not very much different from the one recommended by Gilson. This is really a problem on which there is general agreement.

With respect to the purchase of the Milwaukee road by CN, that possibility still exists. It has not yet been approved by CN or the Canadian Government. We will discuss that in due course.

**Mr. Benjamin:** The United States Justice Department has already approved these. They are only waiting for the approval of the Interstate Commerce Commission in the United States.