

that Canadian governments, not only this government but previous governments, have gone a long way to help try to compensate those people. In fact, we have paid over \$50 million in prisoner of war compensation to those 2,000 people who were taken prisoner back in December 1941.

Nonetheless, there is a claim before the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations put forward by the veterans groups themselves. They have asked us as a non-government organization to refrain from direct entrance into that particular debate.

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• (1500)

PORT OF HALIFAX

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Transport.

A year ago, officials from the Halifax-Dartmouth Port Development Commission warned the government that unless action was taken to address the imbalance between Canada and the U.S. rail rates, the port of Halifax would be in deep trouble.

In December of last year, the same organization presented a list of options for the government to consider.

What is the government going to do to protect the port of Halifax? What action is it going to take to ensure that the port remains viable and that the employment levels remain viable as well?

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, I met with members from the port of Halifax last week. I will be in Halifax on Thursday and will be at the port at that time. We will continue to work with all those people involved to ensure the viability of the port of Halifax.

Points of Order

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of parliamentary delegations from the Republic of Bulgaria, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Romania, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: I wish also to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of members of the Bundestag Committee on Nutrition, Agriculture and Forestry, led by Mr. Siegfried Hornung, Chairman.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: I wish also to draw to the attention of members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. George McLeod, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health of the Province of Saskatchewan.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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POINTS OF ORDER

REQUEST FOR MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, in light of the response of the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs to a question in the House during Question Period and as a member of the Beau-doin-Edwards committee which is sitting until ten o'clock each night making deliberations on a report, would the minister be willing to make a ministerial statement on constituent assemblies tomorrow morning?

Mr. Speaker: I am not at all sure that is a point of order. The hon. member, no doubt, can speak directly with the minister.

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

During every Question Period backbenchers from all sides want an opportunity to ask questions concerning constituents back home and the concerns they have.