

Inquiries of the Ministry

government to interfere with judgments of the court or with ordinary legal processes.

With reference to the question of the rights of the provinces, or of any other parties who feel aggrieved by the judgment, there is, under the Railway Act, a right of appeal.

Mr. Green: May I ask a supplementary question? Is this judgment supposed to be a judgment also in respect of the general rates inquiry, or is the board now to undertake a general rates inquiry having to do particularly with discrimination?

Mr. Chevrier: This judgment is divided into two parts. It deals first with a review of the 21 per cent increase in freight rates which was referred to the government by way of appeal, and, second, with an application made by the Railway Association of Canada for a general increase of 20 per cent in freight rates.

Mr. Green: I was referring to the instructions given to the board to make a general inquiry.

Mr. Chevrier: The answer clearly is that it does not deal with the general inquiry referred to by my hon. friend.

Mr. Coldwell: May I ask a supplementary question? While the minister states correctly that it is not usual for the government to interfere with the judgments of a court of record, in view of the serious implications of this judgment will the government not consider that it is in the public interest to defer any action to put these recommendations into effect?

Mr. Chevrier: The hon. gentleman has virtually repeated his question. I am afraid I have to repeat my answer, and say that I have nothing to add to what I have already said.

Mr. Coldwell: Will the government consider interfering? That is the point.

Mr. Chevrier: Under the Railway Act as it stands I do not think that the government has any right to do so. I cannot speak for the government; I can speak only for myself. I say that it is not the usual practice or custom to do that.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE**TRADE WITH BRITAIN—EFFECT OF DEVALUATION**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. R. Argue (Assiniboia): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Trade and Commerce. In view of Canada's new disadvantage in the British market, caused by the devaluation of the pound, is the minister in a position to announce what steps are contemplated to maintain the British market, and

[Mr. Chevrier.]

whether negotiations will be entered into with British officials for the purpose of renewing our food contracts?

Right Hon. C. D. Howe (Minister of Trade and Commerce): The question begins by making an assertion which I hardly think is correct; it says, "In view of Canada's new disadvantage in the British market". I think, if anything, Canada is in a better competitive position in the British market than she was prior to devaluation. As to negotiations between officials in regard to trading relations, I may say that the continuing committee which was set up at the time of the visit of Sir Stafford Cripps a year ago, is meeting in Ottawa at this moment. It is a committee composed of United Kingdom officials and Canadian officials. I am hopeful that as a result of its deliberations an improvement in the marketing situation will result.

Mr. Argue: May I ask the minister whether food contracts for next year will be renewed?

Mr. Howe: There are two sides that must agree in order to determine whether the food contracts will be renewed. I am afraid I can speak for only one side.

HOUSING**STEAM SUBURBAN SERVICE FOR TORONTO DISTRICT**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. L. Church (Broadview): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply. In view of the fact that we have no cheap land in the Toronto district, will he consider approaching the two steam railways with a view to providing a steam suburban service to accomplish that object?

Hon. Robert H. Winters (Minister of Reconstruction and Supply): The hon. member brought up this question last year. At that time I felt it was fully dealt with. However, I shall be only too glad to look into it again.

Mr. Church: Without such a service the minister's housing plan will not be of much assistance.

Mr. Graydon: Commutation rates to Brampton would help.

SUPERANNUATED CIVIL SERVANTS**COST OF LIVING BONUS OR OTHER SUPPLEMENT**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. In view of repeated representations, and in view of the many promises made during the recent election campaign, especially by government supporters—