

the federal government and who have worked in the third world is to check their background with the American embassy in the country in which they were previously employed. Can the minister tell the House whether such a procedure is extensively used by the RCMP or other government agencies involved in checking the reliability of these Canadians?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Acting Solicitor General): I will see that the inquiry is made.

* * *

TRANSPORT

CROWNSNEST PASS RATES—NAMES OF PROVINCIAL MINISTERS REQUESTING ROYAL COMMISSION INVESTIGATION OF COSTING ASPECTS OF GRAIN MOVEMENT

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Can the minister inform the House of the names of the provincial ministers who requested the royal commission into the costing aspects of grain movement—which is really a royal commission into the Crownsnest Pass rates—in light of the declaration by all western ministers of transport that these statutory rates should not be changed in any way whatsoever?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): I think they are the four transport ministers from the west.

Mr. Murta: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The minister either did not hear my question or did not want to answer it so I will ask basically the same question again. In view of the fact that what I believe the government has called the Snavely Commission inquiring into the costing aspects of grain transportation in western Canada, which in reality is a royal commission looking into the Crownsnest Pass rates, can the minister inform the House which provincial ministers requested this, in view of the fact that the ministers stated publicly they did not want any change whatsoever in the statutory rates?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, I can give no other answer. There is a royal commission on grain handling in the west and it is known publicly, I think, that the ministers from British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba asked us not to modify the Crownsnest Pass rates.

* * *

REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND—PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SECOND PHASE—POSSIBLE SUSPENSION OF ACTIVITIES

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. It refers to a question asked earlier this week by my colleague the hon. member for Malpeque with respect to the total suspension of funds at the end of June for the Rural Development Council. In view of the recommendations of the consultant's report a year and a half ago that a five year extension should be granted for the work of the

Oral Questions

RDC on the second phase of the plan, and the fact that the second phase is now before the minister and his colleagues, can the minister assure this House and the people of Prince Edward Island that there will be adequate provision for public participation in the second phase of the development plan?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, on the question of public participation, there undoubtedly will be. It is our intention to support and encourage the government of Prince Edward Island in this regard. As to the specific organization in question about which I was also questioned by the hon. member for Malpeque, I have checked it out and it is entirely within the responsibility of the province to decide whether it supports that particular organization or not.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): A supplementary question. In view of the fact that 75 per cent of the funds for the Rural Development Council have come from the federal government and the fact that all major questions have been determined by both parties consenting on the importance of various elements, has the federal government agreed to the suspension of the Rural Development Council and its activities?

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, I also answered that question but I will be glad to elaborate slightly. We did not agree, in the sense that we were not consulted. The action was taken by the province of Prince Edward Island which has a complete right. We only heard about it subsequent to the action having been taken.

REPLY OF MINISTER TO COMMUNICATIONS FROM RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): A supplementary question to the same minister. May I ask the minister if he would indicate the tenor of his reply to the communications from the Rural Development Council of Prince Edward Island on this matter?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I replied in about the only possible way I could, given the situation I have outlined. I am indicating to all those who make representations to me that I am transmitting their concerns and interests to the government of Prince Edward Island which seems to me about the only route I can follow at the present time.

* * *

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

REASON FOR EMPLOYMENT OF ECONOMISTS AT HIGH SALARY LEVELS

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. In view of the answer given to question No. 2125 which revealed that the Department of the Environment has 163 economists at a total salary of \$3.8 million per year and that \$3.8 million is more than is paid all the economists in the Department of Finance, could the minister indicate why these econo-