

Oral Questions

monetary policy and I am watching the current situation both from the domestic and the international point of view.

Mr. Hees: Of course, the minister made no attempt to answer my question. Has he received any assurance either from the presidents of the chartered banks or from the Governor of the Bank of Canada that interest rates will not be raised at this time? Yes or no? Come on, answer.

COLLECTING OF CERTAIN COINS BY AMERICANS FOR
MELTING IN UNITED STATES BECAUSE OF SILVER
CONTENT—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago I brought to the attention of the Minister of Finance a practice that has since been expanding—indeed, it has become a racket—whereby Americans come over here with machines, pick up Canadian silver coinage, take it to the United States and there make very large profits. What is the government going to do about this?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that the right hon. gentleman brought this to my attention two weeks ago. It is true that the price of silver has been rising, following the price of gold. There has been some impetus in the buying up of silver coin and exporting it in order to break it down. I have reviewed this matter carefully and when action is taken I will advise the right hon. gentleman of just what has been done.

Mr. Diefenbaker: While consideration is being given to this matter a group of Americans, particularly connected with trucking, are making a bonanza. I ask whether or not an order in council should not be passed, similar to the one brought in in 1970 which prevented this kind of thing taking place unless a permit was secured. That order in council was repealed in 1971. Will the minister not now do something about bringing in an order in council to prevent this racket continuing?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, of course the primary responsibility is to protect the currency here in Canada. As the right hon. gentleman knows, under the Currency Act there is only jurisdiction with respect to money being melted down within the country. He is also aware that since we are dealing with post-1968 currency, which was primarily in nickel, that to date this has not affected the amount of currency in circulation. I have looked into the precedent referred to by the right hon. gentleman and if action is taken it will be announced in due course.

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TRANSPORT

TRAIN DERAILMENTS—REQUEST FOR SPECIAL
COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ACCIDENTS

Mr. Jack Ellis (Hastings): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. In light of my previous questions and in light of the fact that the Canadian Trans-

[Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton).]

port Commission report for 1972, just presented, states that there were 327 train derailments in 1972 compared with 271 in 1971, will the minister now appoint a special committee to investigate these accidents thoroughly?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, this is exactly what the commission is doing right now and I am expecting a report.

INQUIRY AS TO REPORT ON RAILWAY SAFETY

Mr. Charles H. Thomas (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary to the Minister of Transport. On January 30, during a debate in the House on railway safety, the parliamentary secretary indicated that the report on railway safety was almost ready and would be available soon. Can the minister now tell us when this report on general railway safety will be ready?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think the statement was quite accurate.

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PUBLIC BUILDINGS

SUGGESTED DECENTRALIZATION OF FUTURE
CONSTRUCTION TO AREAS OF HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. J. Robert Howie (York-Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister consider the development of a policy directing future government building expansion intended to accommodate viable national services to areas of Canada experiencing high unemployment, provided that such services can function efficiently?

• (1450)

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I thank the hon. member for having given me notice of this question, and for his patience. For some time now the government has, as a matter of policy, sought new opportunities to decentralize national services and facilities with a view to making Canadians more conscious of the federal presence and with a view to improving the services and to offering employment. The location of certain operations, like the mint in Winnipeg, is an indication of this. There are some services which inevitably, for reasons of efficiency, must be located in the national capital, but I fully expect to continue decentralizing, as has been the practice, and I hope the constituency of the hon. member will not be forgotten.

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AGRICULTURE

SUGGESTED PROVISION OF SUBSIDIES TO WOMEN TO
ATTEND FARM MANAGEMENT COURSES

Mr. Elias Nesdoly (Meadow Lake): I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Speaker. Since rural men qualify for government subsidies while attending courses in farm management and rural farm women do not,