

indicated his desire to retire on December 21. This has been well accepted, although we are very sorry, but it is due to personal reasons.

Mr. Bell: Something like Agnew. He retired early.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, as the President of the Treasury Board has been mentioned, may I address a supplementary question to him? In view of the unwillingness of the government to pay adequate salaries to the nurses, will the President of the Treasury Board make it clear that the government will not buy the recommendation of salaries of \$60,000 a year for deputy ministers?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that I can accept the premise of the hon. gentleman's question, that the award was unfair.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. A number of supplementaries are being sought on this subject. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Champlain, the right hon. member for Prince Albert and then return to this subject.

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[Translation]

PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS

POSSIBILITY OF INTERVENTION BY PRIME MINISTER IN QUEBEC ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the right hon. Prime Minister.

Could he tell this House if he will intervene directly or indirectly in the election campaign now under way in the province of Quebec, should he think that the interests of Canadian federalism are threatened?

Mr. Speaker: I doubt that the hon. member's question is in order. In any case, be it sufficient to say that it is hypothetical.

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[English]

ENERGY

STUDY OF POSSIBLE RAILWAY LINE FOR SHIPMENT OF NORTHERN OIL TO AVOID POLLUTION BY TANKERS

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In view of the fact that a group of scientists and professors of Queen's University recommended some months ago that the solution to the problem of the dangers of environmental destruction as a consequence of the movement of oil by ship was that alternative action be taken, is there a task force now in the department which is evaluating the question of shipments being made by a railway that will take several years to build? What is the present position of that task force?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Yes, Mr. Speaker, under the aegis of the Department of Transport and my department a study is

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under way. The team is made up of representatives of Canadian National Railways and Canadian Pacific Railway and they are considering the feasibility of a northern railway for the purpose of shipping oil, with the expectation that we will have a report about the end of the year.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I wonder if consideration is being given to the best possible location for the terminus, in the city of Prince Albert?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, that assumes more than usual importance.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

REGIONAL PAY INEQUITIES—REASONS FOR NOT APPLYING SAME PRINCIPLE TO MEMBERS

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to those asked earlier by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe and is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. In view of the refusal of the Treasury Board to at least commence phasing out regional pay inequities across the nation for employees under its jurisdiction, does the President of the Treasury Board have under active consideration, for the sake of consistency, a measure to pay members of parliament on a regional basis as well?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I think the House is aware that pay arrangements for the public service arise from a process of collective bargaining leading to an agreement. I have not heard any suggestion by members of parliament that they should be paid on a regional basis.

Mr. MacKay: Can the minister then explain the reason for treating this diverse group of federal representatives in a fashion different from the public servants who perform similar tasks in different areas of the nation?

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, as I say, the present arrangement in respect of the public service is as a result of collective agreements arrived at by collective bargaining. An agreement means just that—an agreement.

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TRANSPORT

SHORTAGE OF BOXCARS FOR LUMBER AND GRAIN—ACTION TO INCREASE SUPPLY

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport and arises from the serious effect of the shortage of boxcars upon industry, particularly the lumber industry in British Columbia which has some 4,500 boxcars of lumber awaiting shipment from interior British Columbia, and the continual backlog in the movement of grain from the western provinces to the ports. Can the minister advise the House if he has had discussions with the two national railways on which he can report to the House, and has he