

Hon. Frederick W. Rowe: Honourable senators, I appreciate, as I am sure we all do, that traditionally the Senate has been a bit reluctant to grant committees the right to meet when the Senate is in actual session. However, as one of those senators who raised some issues here a week or so ago, and as one who supported the idea that the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, under the chairmanship of Senator Smith, should try to arrange a meeting with Dr. Bandeen and other officers of Canadian National Railways, I would like, although I am sure I do not need to do so, to urge that tomorrow the committee be given this special right to meet while the Senate is sitting.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE CONSTITUTION

SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE—ALLEGED REFUSAL OF MEMBERS TO MEET NON-STATUS INDIAN CONSTITUENTS

Hon. Daniel Riley: I should like to ask a question of the Leader of the Government to instruct members of the Special Joint Committee on the Constitution not to grant interviews to non-status Indians who seek to meet with their elected representatives sitting on the committee?

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have no information, or even any intimation, that any such suggestion has been made or any such instructions have been issued.

Hon. Jacques Flynn (Leader of the Opposition): I suppose the question refers only to members of the committee who are of the government political allegiance, because I am quite sure that no instructions like that have been given to members of the other parties sitting on the committee.

Senator Riley: I did not refer to members of the opposition. I asked the Leader of the Government in the Senate if that was government policy, because I am informed that non-status Indians with whom I met today—young people and mostly women—were refused the opportunity to meet their elected representatives. Quite apart from the Senate, I think an elected representative is bound to meet with his constituents, whether they be natives, black, white, Catholic, Protestant or anything else, and I deplore this attitude.

● (2040)

AGRICULTURE

HERD MAINTENANCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM—PROPOSED INCLUSION OF PMU UNITS

Hon. Gildas L. Molgat: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Minister of State responsible for the Wheat Board in relation to his responsibility for the Herd Maintenance

Assistance Program. I believe that the minister has received some representations regarding the operators of PMU units in western Canada, certainly from the Province of Manitoba regarding their inclusion under the program. I believe that the program has already been extended to include other types of livestock operations. In this particular case I think the operators are faced with the obligation of maintaining their herds, because most of them operate under contract, and if they do not fulfil their contract they will lose the opportunity to remain in that type of business. I think there are some 94 operators affected in Manitoba. There may be some affected in other western provinces. Is the minister considering extending the program to cover these operators?

Senator Flynn: Of course.

Hon. Hazen Argue (Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board): Honourable senators, I doubt if the Leader of the Opposition knows what the initials PMU stand for, but he may well.

I am pleased that this question has been brought to my attention, because certainly the operators of those units in the western provinces have been under exactly the same disability as have beef producers or dairy cattle operators. I do not have control over the policy. That is dealt with by a cabinet committee, but I think Senator Molgat's suggestion is an excellent one. It carries a great deal of merit, and I shall be pleased to bring it to the attention of my colleagues.

Senator Molgat: I have a supplementary question. Could the minister indicate when the decision might be made in this regard?

Senator Argue: In time to get the money out. We need to have a meeting within a few days to make some other decisions with regard to the administration of this, so I hope it will be quite soon.

Senator Murray: What cabinet committee is considering this matter?

Senator Argue: It is one of the special committees. It may be an ad hoc committee, but it is an important functioning committee and it does a great deal of valuable work. The committee is chaired by Senator Olson, who chairs many other important cabinet committees. I am pleased that he is in the Chair because he understands the problems, and we get important decisions made.

Lloyd Axworthy is a member of the committee, as is—

Senator Flynn: Don't spoil it.

Senator Argue:—Senator Perrault. It consists of a group of western ministers, plus the Minister of Agriculture. It is an important program and it will pay out approximately \$60 million to help maintain the herds in western Canada.

FINANCE

TAXATION OF CAPITAL GAINS—DEFINITION OF CANADIAN-CONTROLLED PUBLIC COMPANIES

Hon. Lowell Murray: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Minister of State for Economic Development