

in western Canada have faced in their entire history. If these hearings are held in camera and the public is not entitled to hear the representations of the railway companies, the elevator companies, farm organizations and others, this will cast a cloud of suspicion over the whole process.

**Mr. Benjamin:** I hope so.

**Mr. Neil:** Will the minister undertake to ensure that these hearings to be chaired by Dr. Gilson will be held in public?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, the reason why the discussions that Mr. Gilson will have—

**Mr. Epp:** Dr. Gilson.

**Mr. Pepin:** Sorry, Dr. Gilson. The reason the discussions that Dr. Gilson will have with the farm leaders will be in camera is simply that the discussions on western transportation and the Crownest Pass rate, in particular, have been held in public for many years.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Pepin:** It is the unanimous view of people consulted on this subject that the time has come now—

**Mr. Epp:** Not of Dr. Gilson.

**Mr. Pepin:** The hon. member does not agree with me, but, I repeat, it is the nearly unanimous view that the time has come now for "negotiation on the subject".

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Pepin:** This is what members of the different pools have been voting on for some time now. The pool representatives have said that if the government is willing to express its view on a number of subjects, they would negotiate with the government. The time has come now—and this is nearly a unanimous view—to negotiate, and this is what Dr. Gilson is going to do.

#### REQUEST THAT NEGOTIATOR'S TERMS OF REFERENCE BE TABLED

**Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw):** Madam Speaker, I would point out to the minister that the negotiations are vital to the producers of western Canada. It is important that they know what representations are being made by the government and by all the other organizations. It is vital that there be no cloud of suspicion over these hearings. However, is the minister prepared at this time to table the terms of reference under which Dr. Gilson will be operating?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, each gentleman or lady who will be at the negotiating table will be elected by the group he or she represents. I do not intend to debate with them the democratic process exercised in farm communities or organizations. Each one of them is elected and the process is very democratic.

#### Oral Questions

As to the hon. member's question as to whether I will table the terms of reference, yes, Madam Speaker, I will as soon as I can.

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#### ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

##### RELEASE OF DOCUMENTS REQUESTED FOR DEFENCE OF MEMBERS

**Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina):** Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister I would like to repeat a question of which he took notice on Friday, and now address it to the Solicitor General. In my question I referred to an article that appeared in the *Edmonton Journal* on February 4, filed by the *Edmonton Journal's* Ottawa correspondent, Paul Jackson. Will the Solicitor General release immediately the documentation the RCMP defence counsel requested which is essential for a fair and full trial for the 17 RCMP officers who are charged in the Quebec courts?

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General):** Madam Speaker, I have personally reviewed all the documents for which requests had been made. These documents were all available to the McDonald commission under the terms of reference of its order in council. The procedure being followed by me in relation to them is that all of the documents that were made public during the course of that commission, or in its report, on the grounds that national security would not be affected by their release, are being made public. Those that were not so declassified will be the subject of my direction that they not be made public before a judicial proceeding on the grounds of national security.

##### REASONS FOR REFUSAL TO RELEASE DOCUMENTS

**Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina):** Madam Speaker, I must say that I do have some sympathy for the present minister since he was not directly involved at the time when the RCMP were instructed to investigate separatism in Quebec. However, in view of the fact that two former RCMP security service officers have indicated they were pressured to get involved in probing separatism in Quebec by his Liberal government, is the reason for the Solicitor General's refusal to release the documentation simply a cover-up for his government's illegal activity; and, secondly, would the Solicitor General indicate whether the two former security service chiefs are correct in their accusations that they were instructed directly by the Prime Minister, or his ministerial colleagues, to get more involved in probing Quebec separatism, whether by legal or illegal means?

● (1440)

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General):** Hon. members are aware that the McDonald commission was established specifically to deal with allegations of that sort and it had a wide-ranging and very lengthy period of investigation in which