

Inquiries of the Ministry

part, many of our towns and villages will become ghost towns.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the right hon. member will realize that I have not had any previous notice of this question and I cannot possibly answer without looking into the matter. I will look into the matter and see if an answer can be provided.

• (1110)

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Transport. In view of the fact that representations were made at the commission hearings in Saskatchewan by a score or more communities through their representatives, by the government of Saskatchewan, by four members of Parliament and by one hon. gentleman from the other place, all in opposition to the closure of these agencies, and since these representations were ignored by the Canadian Transport Commission, will the minister consider asking his colleagues in the cabinet to rescind the order handed down by the commission?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Without looking at the actual details I am not sure whether the cabinet has in fact the authority to overrule the Canadian Transport Commission, but I will be glad to look into the whole issue to see exactly what authority we may have and discuss the matter with the appropriate persons.

REMOVAL OF STATION AGENTS, SASKATCHEWAN AND ALBERTA—CONSIDERATION OF NATURE OF UNDERTAKINGS BY COMPANY IN REVIEW

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister whether as part of his review of this matter he would take special note of the justification given for the decision of the Canadian Transport Commission which is based in part on certain undertakings by the Canadian Pacific that are of greater or lesser significance to many people depending on how they are regarded. For example, there is the undertaking that stations will be kept open where passenger service is provided, but there is not a single bit of passenger service available at any of the locations involved. Will the minister review the whole matter in light of the innocuous undertakings given by Canadian Pacific and the meaningless gestures made by the company?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): To the extent that the question contains a request that I review, yes, I will be glad to do so.

* * *

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

FOREIGN INVESTMENT—INQUIRY AS TO POLICY STATEMENT—DISCUSSION WITH UNITED STATES

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a question to the Prime Minister. In view of the innumerable undertakings given by the right hon. gentleman, beginning some months ago, and the inexplicable delays which have taken place, can the Prime Minister

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

inform us now when the promised statement on government policy with regard to foreign investment or, to use the government's fancy title, domestic control of the national economic environment, will be made to the House?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker. Precisely because there have been innumerable delays and because the government has not been able to come forward with this statement as quickly as it had hoped, I would prefer not to go on record now as setting any date. Past experience has taught me that this is an unwise thing to do in this particular connection.

Mr. Lewis: It may be unwise to name a particular date, but in view of the fact the policy of the government was supposed to have been arrived at last November and to have been contained in a cabinet minute dated November 15, can the Prime Minister tell the House whether the government is still standing by that policy or whether the policy is being reconsidered or has been changed in any respect, and what events, pressures or considerations have been responsible for the delay?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, this question is based on hypotheses as to things that might or might not have happened to a policy statement of which the hon. member knows nothing. I do not think I could answer in a way that would enlighten him except to remind him that both he and his party know the difficulty of arriving at a coherent, broad policy on foreign ownership.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, it occurs to me that Justin could do better than that. The Prime Minister knows that we have given—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member has been recognized for the purpose of asking a supplementary, so perhaps he would ask it.

Mr. Lewis: I should like to ask the Prime Minister this question. In view of the fact that the *Canadian Forum* version of the government's policy has been available publicly for a long time, may I ask the Prime Minister whether the subject matter of Canada's policy on foreign investment has been raised in an informal or a formal way during any discussions with ministers or officers of the United States administration, or in the current trade discussions or in any other discussions that have taken place; and has the government's policy, or the broad outlines of that policy, been communicated to ministers or officers of the United States government?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I know of no way in which that policy could have been communicated to the United States government. The subject may have been mentioned as a subject in various exchanges, but there is no way in which the policy could have been communicated in any substantive form to anyone for the simple reason that when it is ready in substantive and final form it will be communicated to the House of Commons first.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, do I take it from the Prime Minister's replies that the decision which the Prime Minister said had been