

**Mr. Nowlan:** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to get into an argument about the totality of the answers of the Solicitor General. We look forward to his appearance tonight. However, I should like to ask a question of the Acting Prime Minister which I tried to bootleg in yesterday on a point of order.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

**Mr. Nowlan:** I tried to refer to what to me is the fundamental issue involved in questions by members of the opposition, by bootlegging it in under a point of order. I now have the floor, so I will put the question directly to the Acting Prime Minister. Does he not think there is a distinction between the narrow element of criminality, which is obviously being considered in the law courts of the land, and other conduct, whether it is political misconduct, administrative incompetence or administrative indifference, and that the difference would warrant such a public inquiry?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. With all due respect, the hon. member has asked a question which is of a very general nature and which was asked about 15 minutes ago.

**Mr. Marchand (Langelier):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think this was just a mistake but I do not want it to appear in *Hansard* without correction. I never gave an order to the RCMP to make an inquiry.

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### TRANSPORT

#### RAILWAY BRANCH LINE ABANDONMENT—ALLEGED DELIBERATE PROVISION OF POOR SERVICE ON SOME LINES—REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION

**Mr. Arnold Malone (Battle River):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board whether there is any deliberate attempt to provide substandard service on those rail lines that are due for review by January 1, 1976?

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice):** Not to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker. Of course, some of those lines are in need of significant upgrading, and for that reason we attach some urgency to the process of determining which of them will be transferred into the basic rail network in order that upgrading can take place. In the absence of that upgrading, certain limitations occur in service.

**Mr. Malone:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the same minister whether there might be an investigation into this since a number of these rail lines due for review by January 1, 1976, are providing almost no service, which gives the appearance to those communities of an attempt by government to withhold services in order to justify the removal of those rail lines?

**Mr. Lang:** Mr. Speaker, it has been our custom to investigate any specific item brought to our attention by hon. members. If the hon. member would bring the specific items to my attention we will look into them.

### Oral Questions

#### LABOUR CONDITIONS

##### SUGGESTED NEED FOR FULL TIME MINISTER OF LABOUR IN VIEW OF STRIKE SITUATION

**Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South):** Mr. Speaker, would the Acting Prime Minister advise the House when the government intends to rectify the present situation which is; in the face of strikes which are crippling this country there is in effect no Minister of Labour in charge of the department, and no one who is fulfilling on a full-time basis the heavy responsibilities of that office?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the acting minister, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, met with me this morning at which time we were talking about all these disputes throughout the country. He is very much on the job, and the fact that he is not here in the House now is evidence that he is on more important work.

**Mr. Fraser:** Without accepting for a moment the explanation of the Acting Prime Minister, would he advise how much longer the government believes it is proper to be without a Minister of Labour who can fulfil the responsibilities of that office? I am sorry the Minister of Labour is tired, but the Canadian people are sick and tired of this appalling abdication of responsibility on the part of the government.

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### THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

##### SUGGESTED COMMITTEE STUDY OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF ECONOMIC COUNCIL OF CANADA

**Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister. Mr. André Raynauld, Chairman of the Economic Council of Canada, recently called for a public debate on the council's role, commenting that many of the council's reports do not get read. When Mr. Deutsch was chairman, way back in 1966 and 1967, the council addressed itself to the problem of inflation, and recommended that its studies and recommendations should be referred annually to a joint committee of the House and the Senate which would look at the council's recommendations and hold hearings on them. In light of the rising inflation we have in Canada at the present time, along with our rising unemployment problem and the need for establishing some outside organization to assist the government in establishing appropriate policy, I would like to ask this question.

● (1440)

My question to the Acting Prime Minister is will he give the recommendation of the Chairman of the Economic Council of Canada some consideration by setting up a joint subcommittee of the committee composed of the House and Senate which might be helpful to the government in solving some of its present economic problems.

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I would not want to turn down a useful suggestion of this kind without consideration. However, I think