

Oral Questions

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Marchand (Langelier):—so I referred the judgment to the legal branch of my department. I hope that in a day or two I can give a more satisfactory answer to the question.

**FREIGHT RATES—REQUEST FOR SUPPORT OF
SASKATCHEWAN POSITION BEFORE TRANSPORT
COMMISSION—POSSIBLE RESUBMISSION OF TARIFFS BY
RAILWAYS**

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the Saskatchewan government is applying to the CTC today on this very ground, may I ask the minister, first, if he will instruct his officials or the Minister of Justice to support the position of Saskatchewan before the CTC and, second, would the minister tell the House if the CTC will now have to hold hearings and require the railroads to resubmit their tariffs.

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I do not have the power to instruct the Minister of Justice to do anything and I do not think he needs to be instructed at all! I think this is a complicated case. The hon. member is well aware of the National Transportation Act which was adopted by this House in 1967, and by virtue of which all the railways have to do is file their intentions with the board—not with the Department of Transport but with the CTC. I think this is the legal debate which has been decided upon by the court. Before I go further, I should like to have the legal opinion of my people.

* * *

● (1450)

AIR TRANSPORT

**CHARTER FLIGHTS—ALLEGATIONS OF PRICE FIXING—
GOVERNMENT ACTION**

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my question to the Minister of Transport and ask, first, whether the federal government knew about what appears to be price fixing in charters among the six north Atlantic airlines using the north Atlantic route, and, second, if it knew about the situation, whether it encouraged it through the actions of the Canadian Transport Commission.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, of course, floor prices for Atlantic or international airlines are assessed by an international organization. But if the hon. member is referring to chartered planes, it is the Canadian Transport Commission that determines the rates. Well, I did not understand to which group the hon. member referred to.

[English]

Mr. Murta: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. As, apparently, at least one airline presented an estimate which was considerably lower than any offered by the

[Mr. Marchand (Langelier).]

other six airlines and as there is, apparently, price fixing on the part of the airlines, certainly on the part of the government airline, in flight charters to Great Britain, will the federal government authorize the holding of a public inquiry or initiate a private inquiry in order to determine the facts and to assure that this kind of thing will not happen again, so that contracts will be awarded to the company prepared to bid the lowest amount for the transportation of passengers overseas.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member forgot to answer my question. Was he referring to the scheduled airlines or to the charter airlines?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: I am not sure if that is an answer or a question, but I think the hon. member should be allowed a supplementary.

Mr. Murta: Mr. Speaker, to answer the question of the hon. member across the floor, let me say that it is charter airlines we are talking about.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): In that case, it must be approved by the CTC.

* * *

ENERGY

**SYNCRUDE PROJECT—RESULT OF DISCUSSION WITH
ALBERTA**

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Has he been in contact with the Alberta government or any of the syndicates representing the Syncrude plant, as it now appears that this project is a dismal failure and will not go ahead.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity, with my colleague, the President of the Treasury Board, of meeting members of the Alberta government yesterday for the purpose of reviewing our mutual efforts with regard to the examination of the Syncrude project. The first priority that we discussed and agreed upon was that we would seek an extension of the time period in which the two levels of government and other interested parties could review the situation and decide whether or not they would invest in that project. I hope that within 48 hours we, and the Alberta government, should both have a clearer indication about the possibilities of a longer time scale for this examination so that we can decide on what terms the government and other private parties might participate in the project.

**SYNCRUDE PROJECT—ALLEGATION HIGH TAXATION AND
PRESENT PRICE OF CRUDE REASON FOR FAILURE TO
DEVELOP**

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. As it is estimated that the crude petroleum reserves in the tar sands are six times