

*Oral Questions*

ready to go for at least another five years. Has he considered this?

**An hon. Member:** Marc Lalonde is ready to go right now.

**Mr. Lalonde:** Madam Speaker, I have indicated that I put forward four different offers on the table and they have been turned down. If my colleague suggests that we should have a special arrangement or separate arrangement for the tar sands development, I certainly would not object to discussing such a proposal. But I must say that I have seen no particular interest in such a separate arrangement for tar sands from my Alberta colleague. I have had no indication whatever that this would go anywhere.

But if my friend thinks that there is a possibility of making real progress by dissociating the general discussions and dividing them, I am certainly willing to consider this and even to communicate with my Alberta colleague to ask him whether he is interested. However, I must tell the hon. member that the meetings I have had lately lead me to believe that this would not be very productive.

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## RAILWAYS

## DECISION ON BRANCH LINES

**Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar):** Madam Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. Would he inform the House when the decision on branch railway lines will be made, the lines mentioned in what is called the Neil report, which he indicated he would look at? Was that decision made, and can he announce it to the House?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** I will do so quite soon, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Murta:** Madam Speaker, "quite soon" is really not good enough in terms of an answer. Can the minister give us an indication whether "quite soon" will be before the end of July, and is he giving very serious consideration to retaining the lines that were put into the permanent network? That is what westerners really want to know.

**Mr. Pepin:** I am quite aware of the importance of making a decision soon, because uncertainty in these circumstances is not good. But I have to go through the normal process of obtaining the support of my colleagues for whatever action I will take. My recommendation will be going to a committee of the cabinet very soon.

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## FISHERIES

## SWORDFISH—U.S. BAN ON IMPORTS FROM CANADA

**Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore):** Madam Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Fisheries and

Oceans. In view of the fact that the extensive U.S. market has been closed by U.S. regulations prohibiting the importation of swordfish from Canada since 1971, thereby making the 3,500 tonnes quota for 1980 meaningless, I ask the minister whether he has recently been in touch with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which is responsible for the regulation, to request them to lift the ban. If so, what response did he receive?

**Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** I have not been in touch recently with the Food and Drug Administration in the U.S. I know that some efforts had been made before I left office, and I presume they were continued under my successor. I have nothing new to report on that. I am afraid that in fact what we are seeing is what I had warned about some time ago—that the size of the Canadian market was simply not large enough to permit a very economic operation.

**Mr. Crouse:** Since the Canadian swordfish season opened in June, and the Canadian market is very limited—as the minister stated—will he undertake to present to the U.S. FDA a well-documented report covering scientific research to clarify the fact that the mercury level in swordfish is not significant enough to endanger human health, and request that the importing ban should be revoked so that this approximately \$15 million industry could be restored to Nova Scotia?

**Mr. LeBlanc:** Madam Speaker, I know that a great deal of very valuable and correct information was given to our American friends. They did not act at that time, but I think it is worth going to them again.

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## TRANSPORT

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF TASK FORCE RESPECTING MOVEMENT OF GRAIN

**Mr. Bill McKnight (Kindersley-Lloydminster):** Madam Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Transport. Did the minister give any consideration to the recommendation of the grain transportation task force which suggested that the private sector, if certain economic situations were to their advantage, would invest in rolling stock, cars—similar to the situation of the 100 per cent tax write-off on Canadian films? I believe that the suggestion was accepted by the previous administration. Did he give any consideration to that?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, we are giving consideration to everything, and I will add this one to the others.

## LEASING OF HOPPER CARS

**Mr. Bill McKnight (Kindersley-Lloydminster):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased with the answer the minister gave,