

Oral Questions

en and turkey. Will the minister indicate why the percentage of contaminated birds is so high? Also, it has been reported that the percentage is increasing annually. Why is no action being taken to check this increase in contamination of birds as some other countries have done—namely, Denmark and Sweden—and come to grips with the problem?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, supervision of the salmonella problem, as the Minister of National Health and Welfare indicated, is mostly under her jurisdiction. The Department of Agriculture is also concerned about it.

As I am sure the hon. member knows, there are 1,800 different varieties of salmonella. About six or eight kinds can do damage to human beings. We are trying to control this. I am sure the hon. member also knows that the problem starts right at the beginning with the chicken, turkey, or whatever it may be. This is not confined to poultry products; it is in all meat and fish products.

I am sure the hon. member knows, as well, that it is good kitchen practice to properly clean the board which will be used for cutting up the chicken. The poultry must also be properly cooked. In that way this problem can be eliminated and one will be perfectly safe. You can be perfectly content with the product if you follow proper hygiene. It is a known fact that two out of three persons have this contamination on their hands and can spread it by touching food, and so on.

It is not right to say that any one country has eliminated this problem completely. You could not possibly eliminate it, but you can use every precaution I have mentioned, and that is what we are doing.

* * *

● (1432)

RAILWAYS**EASTERN TRANSCONTINENTAL PASSENGER SERVICE**

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, I have a non-turkey question for the Minister of Transport. I would not call him a turkey; he is not too bad.

We now have in front of us the preferred plan for eastern transcontinental rail passenger service. While at first blush it seems to provide us with an adequate improvement over existing services, it does give rise to one or two questions. First, the timetable for implementation calls for roughly April, 1979. I wonder whether the minister would indicate to the House what preplanning has taken place up to this point by CN, CP and VIA to put in place the necessary timetables and to order the new type of rolling-stock and other facilities which are strongly recommended in the report?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the date of April 1 is being suggested by the Canadian Transport Commission, but I do not know whether the rail-ways or VIA have yet had a chance to react to it. It may be

[Mr. Yewchuk.]

possible, as the CTC suggests in its report, that because the changes are not as major as might have been thought, they will be easier to implement. I shall be discussing this aspect in particular with VIA and CTC, of course, will now come forward with a final plan after which we will hear from VIA as to whether there are any alternatives requested.

As far as rolling-stock is concerned, VIA has been proceeding in obtaining from CN and CP dedicated passenger rolling-stock and has been going ahead with the refurbishing of passenger cars. As well, the ten trains, the lightweight, rapid, comfortable type are, of course, on order so there is no problem contemplated with relation to implementation in this regard.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, I gather from what the minister has said that once again the people in Atlantic Canada are expected to go ahead with a new system with old or worked-over equipment.

Can the minister tell us whether or not VIA Rail will be in a position, some time prior to the implementation of the final report, to bring into service the new light, rapid and comfortable type of diesel rail car service to which the minister has alluded?

Mr. Lang: The Atlantic provinces will have the same opportunities as Canadians throughout the VIA system to use cars which are improved and rebuilt. I would join the hon. member in seeming to suggest that this is not an important change. However, he will have to agree that Canadians in the Atlantic region can be no further ahead than the rest of Canada with respect to riding in the light, rapid and comfortable trains which are on order.

These trains have been on order for about a year now. They will cost a great deal and will be excellent trains, but we really do need them to be built before even the people in the Atlantic provinces can ride in them. So as soon as they are ready, which will be some time in the mid-1980s, they will be available to the maritimes as well as to other parts of the country.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

Mr. Jim Fleming (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs and follows up an earlier question by the sometimes vocal member for Regina-Lake Centre.

Can the minister say if the historic move to establish diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China has any immediate implications for our own relationship with China, and especially our very favourable trade relations at the moment?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs): I can only repeat what has already been said, that Canada certainly regarded this as a welcome de-