

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Graftiey:—because I have to—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will the hon. member please take his seat. Might I point out to the hon. member that he is making a statement, not asking a question.

Mr. Graftiey: I should like to ask the Minister of Labour, in view of this anomaly, whether he will make the strongest possible representations to the Minister of Justice and the civil service commission. I make this differentiation because, as I understand it, the penitentiaries commission are independent of the civil service commission for hiring purposes.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, if the facts as set out by my hon. friend are correct I will be glad to make proper representations to my colleagues.

Mr. Graftiey: On a point of order, the minister says "if the facts are correct". I believe they are correct. This being the situation, could I also address a supplementary question to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. A policy which discriminates against people who are 45 years of age and over completely nullifies the effects of veterans—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member is repeating the same form of statement. If he cares to ask a question he may do so, but I do not think it is up to the hon. member to make a statement unless he has absolute proof.

TRANSPORT

REPORTED DISCONTINUANCE OF BRIDGE SUBSIDY

On the orders of the day:

Mr. D. M. Fisher (Port Arthur): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport. There is some confusion about whether the bridge subsidy payments have ended. Apparently the railways have told certain shippers that the bridge subsidy has ended, and if that is so I should like to ask what is the purpose of the several million dollars in the estimates for this year, and when the action formally ending the subsidy was taken.

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, as I understand it—though I am not sure that this is a proper question for the orders of the day—the bridge subsidy is provided by parliament and can only be changed by parliament. Some day I hope to introduce some legislation on this matter which has not been introduced yet.

Mr. Fisher: A supplementary question. Would the minister investigate at once and

Inquiries of the Ministry

seek an explanation why a rate increase was passed on to the shippers as from March 1, the reason being given that the bridge subsidy was ending?

Mr. Pickersgill: If the hon. gentleman can provide me with some concrete evidence of these things so that I can make an inquiry about them I will be glad to do so.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

TORONTO—REQUEST FOR INCREASED HOSPITAL GRANT

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Reid Scott (Danforth): Mr. Speaker, I want to address a question to the Prime Minister concerning the national problem of hospital bed shortage in metropolitan Toronto. In view of the meetings being held now in Toronto to try to solve this urgent matter, would the Prime Minister consider making a decision one way or the other as to whether the federal government will increase its grants, so that the people who are trying to solve this problem will know whether they can look to the government for assistance or whether they are going to have to solve the financial problem in other ways? Would the Prime Minister consider making a decision one way or the other, instead of giving the indecisive answers which we have been getting over the last eight months?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate both the importance and the urgency of this matter, and I will be glad to discuss it with my colleagues directly concerned and make a statement at the earliest possible date.

Mr. Scott: A supplementary question. Is the Prime Minister aware that this is just about the answer he gave me six months ago, and would he again consider making a firm decision one way or the other in the very near future?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I think this is the first time I have answered my hon. friend on this question.

PUBLIC SERVICE

GLASSCO COMMISSION—APPLICATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO CERTAIN DEPARTMENTS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Gene Rheame (Northwest Territories): Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Finance arises out of press reports that the federal Departments of Agriculture, Northern Affairs, Veterans Affairs and Transport are to be made guinea pigs for Glassco commission economies. In view of the absence of any