

Inquiries of the Ministry

which relates to the question I asked the minister last Thursday concerning the threatened abrogation of the air agreement between The Netherlands and Canada. Has the minister any further information or details on the reported threat by the government of The Netherlands?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of Transport): Nothing that I think could add to the situation, Mr. Speaker. If there are further negotiations with The Netherlands government in this matter they will be conducted in the spirit of co-operation that has always existed between our two countries. I can tell my hon. friend that we will be as co-operative as we can within the framework in which these international agreements are made, which basically provides that the interests of Canada are protected equally with those of our friends and allies abroad.

Mr. Nesbitt: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, Has the government of The Netherlands in fact threatened to abrogate this air agreement?

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Speaker, there have been indications that public statements have been made to this effect. I do not think I would wish to comment beyond that at the moment.

[Translation]

CANADIAN CENTENNIAL**INQUIRY AS TO MEDALS ISSUED**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Martial Asselin (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Secretary of State. Could the hon. lady tell us if it is true that she has sent out Canada's silver medals to the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) and also to Mr. René Levesque for services rendered to Canada? I should like to know if that is true.

[English]

Hon. Judy V. LaMarsh (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, centennial medals have been sent out, the first of these last week, to all Canadian civilians in the table of precedence for Canada and to all individuals in the federal public service for whom nominations have been received. They were also sent out where provincial nominations have been received for individuals in the provincial public services, education, the judiciary and municipal services.

I am informed that this medal is to be worn on the left breast and will take precedence after any commemorative medals previously granted, such as the coronation medal, and before long service, good conduct or efficiency medals.

I know there has been some suggestion that perhaps the hon. member for Lapointe and other hon. members, notably provincial members, might not have been recipients of these medals, but the regulations provide that those to be honoured include those in the federal table of precedence. I am informed that this is in accord with the precedent some years earlier when Mr. Henri Bourassa was awarded a coronation medal. Since it did not meet his expressed political beliefs he returned it to the government and that option, of courses, is open to anyone who does not wish to receive this medal.

TRANSPORT**INQUIRY INTO RAILWAY COSTING METHODS IN PROPOSED LINE ABANDONMENTS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. E. Pascoe (Moose Jaw-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport which relates to the public hearing by the Canadian Transport Commission into railway costing methods for proposed rail line abandonments. Will the minister give an assurance that all interested groups and individuals will have full opportunity to present arguments and briefs? To make this possible will the minister request the commission to hold at least one hearing in the west, where any curtailment of rail service will have the greatest adverse effect?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have been assured by the commission that they will take the necessary steps to see that all points of view are adequately expressed and represented before them. I cannot recall whether this included the possibility of holding hearings in the west. I suspect it did, but I will certainly bring this suggestion to the attention of the president of the commission.

Mr. R. R. Southam (Moose Mountain): A supplementary question to the Minister of Transport, Mr. Speaker. Following the completion of this inquiry into the cost accounting techniques, as suggested by the minister in his current press release, will the minister assure the house that the standing committee on transport and communications will be