

Why has the minister shelved this report? Why have we heard so little about it? If he has not shelved it, when is he going to provide the CRTC with the policy guidelines it has strongly requested so that it no longer has to operate in a policy vacuum on this very important matter?

**Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment):** Madam Speaker, the Minister of Communications is away from the House today on important government business regarding the National Film Board's affairs. I note that the hon. member indicated he had a series of questions to ask. In view of the fact that we are near the end of the question period, perhaps the best thing would be for me to take notice of those questions and ensure that the Minister of Communications is aware of the hon. member's concerns in order that he can respond fully when next in the House.

**Mr. Rose:** Madam Speaker, the absence of a policy of competitive licensing recently allowed a Toronto-based cable conglomerate, a monster, to gobble up a Victoria cable company, despite the fact that as far back as 1977 Capital Cable Co-op had been promised that the department would deal "fully and fairly with the matter". I ask that the minister be informed of my question. Why did he not set aside the CRTC decision to allow Canadian cable systems to proceed in that application, especially when, at the time he refused to set it aside, he had the Babe-Slayton report in his hands recommending quite the opposite procedures?

● (1500)

**Mr. Roberts:** Madam Speaker, as I have already told the hon. member, I will draw these questions to the attention of the Minister of Communications who, I am sure, will want to reply to them very fully as soon as possible.

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## RAILWAYS

### ABANDONED RIGHTS-OF-WAY IN WESTERN CANADA

**Mr. Bill McKnight (Kindersley-Lloydminster):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Since the minister has accepted the policy of his predecessor, the hon. member for Vegreville, to transfer the rail rights-of-way abandoned in western Canada to the provinces and interested individuals, could he update the House on the standing of that process and whether the order in how many other is about to be signed making this possible?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, the discussion about these matters is going on with the provinces. However, we are discussing now only those rights-of-way which have been the subject of an agreement between the department and the railways. As far as I can recall though, the discussion is still being pursued. Some provinces would like more than what the government is in a position to offer but the impression I have from recent conver-

### Privilege—Mr. Gamble

sations with officials on that matter is that we are getting close to a resolution of it.

**Mr. McKnight:** Madam Speaker, could the Minister of Transport inform the House about the problems in these negotiations? He mentioned, as I recall, that some provinces wanted more transfers. Could the minister explain which provinces are giving his department difficulty and for what reason?

**Mr. Pepin:** Madam Speaker, I cannot detail the position of each one of the provinces on this matter, but I will do so in a conversation with my hon. friend.

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## POINT OF ORDER

### MR. EPP—STATEMENT MADE BY MR. AXWORTHY

**Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order which arose this afternoon out of an exchange with the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) during question period.

I think it is important to the House that the record be clear. The minister can play fast and loose with what are details on the public record, but I want to tell him, and you, Madam Speaker, very clearly, that while he might disagree with components of any propositions made by anyone in this House, or for that matter any components of the charter, this party has endorsed the charter. That has been done quite clearly, in public and on the record. I would ask the minister to keep that in mind and I ask that he not use something which is obviously not in keeping with the facts. If he has regained his ability to read facts, I will send him a copy of the proposal.

**Madam Speaker:** The hon. member has made his point, and I will allow that.

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## PRIVILEGE

### MR. GAMBLE—DELAY BY MR. MACGUIGAN IN ANSWERING QUESTION

**Mr. John Gamble (York North):** Madam Speaker, my question of privilege arises out of a question which I asked in this House on January 16. It was directed to the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) but responded to by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard). As reported in *Hansard* at page 6271, the question reads:

Madam Speaker, my question should be directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, but in his absence I will direct it to the Deputy Prime Minister, who will know that last week Canadians, including a renowned Canadian author and columnist, Barbara Amiel, were incarcerated in the Mashava prison in Mozambique during which time Miss Amiel almost expired as a consequence of contracting tropical diseases. Having regard to the fact that both Canadians were incarcerated without just cause by the government of that country, has the Government of Canada sent a stern note of protest to the government of