

hand, as in the case of the Vancouver firefighters, they do not receive comparable pay to that in the private sector, when do the minister and the government intend to phase out this particular approach which appears to be causing difficulties?

● (1430)

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): If the hon. gentleman will discuss the matter with his colleague from Vancouver, the one thing he will see is that the issue here is a conflict between a resolution of the Public Service Alliance convention calling for national pay rates and the refusal of the local in Vancouver to accept that resolution. The problem is to reconcile the quite natural demands of the Vancouver firefighters for some comparability of pay with people in Vancouver rather than with some national average.

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AIR TRANSPORT

STRIKE BY FIREFIGHTERS AT VANCOUVER AIRPORT— DISCUSSIONS TO ACHIEVE SETTLEMENT

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the President of the Treasury Board. I appreciate that the union has asked the men to return to work, but what I would like to ask him is whether there are discussions going on today in Ottawa with his department, and what is the nature of these discussions, so far as he can tell the House, between Treasury Board and the union affected with a view to settling this crippling work stoppage?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Transport, as the Minister of Transport has indicated, has sent a special team to Vancouver to talk directly to the departmental employees. In the meantime, urgent discussions are continuing at the national level here in Ottawa between the bargaining agent and Treasury Board.

OVERSHOOTING OF HALIFAX AIRPORT RUNWAY BY AIR CANADA DC-8—SUGGESTED INDEPENDENT BODY TO INVESTIGATE ALL TRANSPORTATION ACCIDENTS

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question related in a sense to airports to direct to the Minister of Transport. It arises out of concern about public safety. What can he tell the House today about the regrettable incident involving a DC-8 overshooting a runway at Halifax? Has an investigation been launched and, if so, will the details be made public?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that it was a regrettable incident. A team of inquiry from my department is in Halifax right now trying to find out exactly what happened.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question goes from the specific to the general. In light of the current circumstances that surround transportation accidents in Canada, the growing number of such accidents,

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their relevance to the general public and their direct relevance to the travelling public, does the minister not think it is time to remove from the jurisdiction of the Department of Transport responsibility for the investigation of accidents affecting all modes of transport and establish an independent body so that the general public will not be confused by the apparent conflicts of interest?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, when I spoke in the House a few weeks ago I think I mentioned that I would favour an independent board in such cases, and that whenever a new policy was introduced this would be part of it.

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GRAIN

ESTIMATED SHORTFALL IN WHEAT EXPORTS BECAUSE OF TRANSPORTATION DIFFICULTIES

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. Has the minister made any estimate of the shortfall in wheat exports that the present transportation difficulties will cause by the end of the crop year and, if so, what is that figure?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, there is no specific figure available because of the speculative features that are involved in any such calculations. The Wheat Board certainly would have liked to make additional sales in certain circumstances and will still want to do so if the special measures now being taken allow more grain to be moved to export position than had earlier been anticipated.

Mr. Ritchie: In view of the special arrangements, is the Wheat Board considering paying farmers for trucking wheat from branch lines at present inoperative to main line points that are open?

Mr. Lang: I know that this is a matter they have at least been examining, but to this point they certainly have not made a decision to do that.

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IMMIGRATION

CHILEAN REFUGEES—REPRESENTATIONS BY CHURCHES FOR CHANGES IN PROCEDURES—POSITION OF MINISTER

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. Did the minister receive a deputation of leading churchmen last week who pointed out that there was a continuing emergency in the Chilean refugee situation, particularly in Peru and Argentina, and urging procedural reforms in handling these cases? If so, what was his response to the representations of the delegation?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, that is correct. I met with a delegation from the Canadian Council of Churches, along with my colleague, the Solicitor General. We discussed the