

[Translation]

MINISTER'S POSITION

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, to me it is obvious that the present Minister of Transport disagrees entirely with what was said and reported by his predecessor, who said on page 26: "Regulation will provide new opportunities for many segments of the air transportation industry and for many users, especially in the field of local and regional services."

What does the Minister intend to do to ensure there will be no increase in the cost to travellers, that the quality of service, especially in remote areas, will not deteriorate and that, and this is particularly important, there will still be a certain measure of competition in this field?

[English]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am very surprised that after the proposed National Transportation Act was introduced into the House some six months ago and a new version was introduced several weeks ago, the Official Opposition transportation critic does not know what is in it. I refer the hon. gentleman to the Bill in which he will find there are many safeguards with respect to all the matters to which he refers, including northern and remote service. A national transportation agency will be set up which will be able to consider matters of competition and have matters referred to it. There are many protections. I suggest the hon. gentleman read the Bill. It is a genuine piece of art.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

TIMING OF PARLIAMENTARY VOTE

Mr. Jim Jepson (London East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. A clear majority of Canadians have indicated to the House that they want capital punishment reinstated. We have heard from the previous Minister that we can expect a free vote. My question is simply this. When can we expect this vote?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member knows, the Government's position is quite clear on this issue. At the present time I am currently examining options as to how this issue might be brought forth.

VOTING DATE INQUIRY

Mr. Bob Hicks (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Deputy Prime Minister. His answer is not good enough. It is not good enough for Canadians and not good enough for the Members of this House. Trying to get a commitment from our own Government is like

Oral Questions

trying to walk across an ocean full of whipped cream on snowshoes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hicks: Will the Deputy Prime Minister relate to the House the calendar year in which this important matter will be discussed?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I can only assure the Hon. Member that I will take his vigorous representation very seriously.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF NEW BRUNSWICK MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of Hon. Members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Fernand Dubé, Minister of Commerce and Technology for the Province of New Brunswick.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

LEVEL OF BENEFITS

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. It concerns the principle of unemployment insurance and the basic level of support that it is supposed to provide to the unemployed. The Minister may answer my question with regard to the Forget Commission or not.

If the recommendations of the Forget Commission were in place now 23 per cent of women claimants would be receiving less than \$50 a week on which to live. Will the Minister assure the House that the Government will not cut benefits to Canadian men and women?

[Translation]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I think it is premature at this stage, now that we are about to table one of the most important reports ever produced by a royal commission of inquiry, to give any assurances or any commitment on the part of the Government in this respect. We are going to table the report this afternoon. We will make a statement, and at that time, I expect there will be a debate and discussion and an opportunity for Members to express their views.