

*Oral Questions*

consider this exchange of notes, either from its regular examination of estimates or through the method suggested by the Hon. Member.

• (1140)

## INTENT OF STANDING ORDER

**Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Madam Speaker, I would ask the Minister to advise the Government House Leader of the intent of the rule that those committees were to become scrutiny committees far beyond the normal "guillotined" estimates process. When the Minister is speaking to the Government House Leader, will he have that in mind?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Yes, Madam Speaker, as far as I am concerned I would like to see the widest possible debate in the country, and the widest possible discussion with respect to the over-all arms situation, the negotiations, and how the possible testing of a Cruise missile in Canada is related to the over-all posture of the NATO alliance. I am quite prepared to discuss this matter with the Government House Leader.

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## RAILWAYS

## CROWSNEST PASS RATE CHANGE—OPPOSITION BY FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West):** Madam Speaker, I have a couple of questions for the Minister of Transport. Since the Prime Minister has said, "We do not want to fiddle with the Crow rate unless there is some very strong feelings throughout the West that this rate should be re-opened", and in view of the fact that Canada's main agricultural organization, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture rejected the Minister's plan to demolish the Crow rate, may I ask the Minister is he still insisting on proceeding with his proposal? Does he plan to change it? Is he going to keep on stubbornly fiddling while he "burns our Crow"?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, I must compliment my hon. friend for quoting the Prime Minister well. The Prime Minister said, and I repeat, that no action would be taken on the Crow unless there was a desire in the West for a change in the Crow. There is such a change. There is such a desire for change in the Crow. I have already indicated, and the Member knows it well, that in all recent discussions, for example at the Canadian Federation of Agriculture meeting yesterday, at the "outlooks" seminar in Saskatchewan a few days ago, the question was not should the Crow remain or should the Crow not remain. The question was which way should it be changed. The division among people is on methods and not, basically, on substance.

I recognize the Canadian Federation of Agriculture voted in favour yesterday of continuing payments to the railway. But then at the same time, at a seminar in Saskatchewan two days

ago, three groups opposed the present plan and seven groups agreed with it, with diversified comments on it.

The world is evolving. People are expressing dissatisfaction now that they did not get 100 per cent of what they were looking for, but they will come to the conclusion that 75 per cent or 80 per cent is not a bad average.

## NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY PROPOSAL

**Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West):** Madam Speaker, the Minister just does not get the message. There is no question but that an overwhelming majority of Canadian producers, not only grain producers, but others, are opposed to his proposal. This morning the New Democratic Party released an alternative proposal and I sent copies over to the Minister's office. It is an alternative plan to keep the Crow rate and create 110,000 more jobs than even the Minister proposes, and will upgrade railways by public investment in exchange for equity ownership. Since the Minister's proposal is opposed by the majority of producers, will he consider our proposal, which would cost no more than the Government's proposal?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, I will certainly do that. I apologize to my hon. friend. I have not read it yet because I was busy doing something else this morning. I will do so during the weekend, and I am sure we will have plenty of occasions to debate it further.

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## INCOME TAX

INCLUSION OF INCOME TOTALS ON TAX RETURNS—  
LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

**Hon. John M. Reid (Kenora-Rainy River):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. A constituent of mine has complained to me that his total income appeared on his federal individual tax return form. I looked at mine, and I find that my income appears on my federal income tax return form. I assume that everyone's income now appears on their federal income tax return form.

My second point, Madam Speaker, is that the Post Office is in charge of delivering these forms. There is a fair amount of theft which goes on in the mail and I am investigating a case of a young lady who lost her interest payment from Canada Savings Bonds because it was intercepted in the mail. Someone used her social insurance number.

What legislative authority does the Minister have to place on income tax return forms my social insurance number, and every Canadian's social insurance number; my wife's social insurance number and every Canadian's spouse's social insurance number, together with the total family income? What legislative authority does the Department of National Revenue have to make this information available to whomever wants to go and filch it out of the Post Office system?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!