

make it public? Does he mean he will decide whether it is worth discussing with the province? Does he mean he will decide whether or not he will have any local consultation?

The unhappy history of rail passenger service in south-western Ontario is that every time the minister purports to answer a question he in fact does not answer but instead he raises all kinds of other questions. The path to the solution of this problem has been obstructed time and time again by ministerial uncertainties, evasions and contradictions.

The following are reasonable questions which I put to the minister through you, Mr. Speaker. They are not conceived out of political partisanship but out of genuine concern for the plight of the many communities in south-western Ontario that have been neglected, ignored and misled. I put these questions to the minister not in an atmosphere of confrontation but by way of sincere appeal for information, and with the assurance that all members representing the affected area will do all they can to assist him in finding a solution to the problem. These are my questions: One, will the minister make public immediately the CTC report that he has now in his possession? Two, will the minister agree to local consultation with municipal representatives and officials, and the public, once they have had an opportunity to consider the report? Three, will the minister then consult with the provincial authorities if he deems it advisable? Four, finally, will the minister reinstate passenger rail service in southwestern Ontario?

● (2210)

**Mr. Joseph-Philippe Guay (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, the question of the mid-western Ontario passenger service was actively studied by the Canadian Transport Commission in co-operation with the government of Ontario. I know that the hon. member for Perth-Wilmont (Mr. Jarvis) did not hear what I said so possibly I should repeat it.

The question of the mid-western Ontario passenger service was actively studied by the CTC in co-operation with the government of Ontario. As a result of this close co-operation with Ontario, on November 9, 1973, the CTC received certain origin/destination information which, after evaluation, indicated that public surveys were required. As a result, the CTC contracted to have public surveys carried out. These started during the last week of November and are almost finished. The surveys consist of multiple interviews with some 1,200 families.

This action by the CTC met the recommendations formulated when the mid-western development council met with myself, five other members of parliament and six government officials earlier this year to discuss the mid-western Ontario transportation problem. Notwithstanding the progress made to date in the study of this question, I should like to inform you of the reasons for the delay in producing reports on the studies and for the delay in the resolution of the question of the type and extent of public consultations required. Of course, we received the interim report on this question from the CTC over two weeks ago. The delays which occurred in producing the reports were due in large part to the departure of three transportation analysts who had been working on the study. Needless to

#### *Adjournment Motion*

say, the project responsibilities were immediately passed on to others, but this inevitably delayed the production of reports. In view of the importance of the study, persons from other studies were reassigned to accelerate the work.

#### AGRICULTURE—INCREASE IN FARM COSTS—REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION BY FOOD PRICES REVIEW BOARD

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville):** Mr. Speaker, tonight I wish to pursue the question which I asked some months ago about the failure of the Prices Review Board to study farm costs when they were looking into the price of food in this country. It seems to me that the increase in cost to the farmer is a forgotten fact when looking at the cost of food to the consumer. The price that the farmer has to pay to produce a bushel of wheat or to grow a hog is increasing rapidly every year and not just the feed input but machinery, machinery repairs, fertilizer, lumber, fencing and all the other materials that the farmer needs to produce food for this country and many other countries in the world.

I thought it important that the Prices Review Board, to be effective, should analyse farm input costs as they are a large part of what the consumer pays for food. Today I looked at some figures from Statistics Canada which verify my point.

For example, in the third quarter of 1973 compared to the second quarter, that is a three month period, farm costs went up by 7.3 per cent. That is a hefty increase in a three month period. If you take the third quarter of 1973 over the third quarter of 1972, you find that farm input costs escalated by some 20.1 per cent over a one year period. When the farmer has to pay that much more for the basic necessities to produce food in this country it is no wonder that the price of food is going up. The farmer has to pass this on or be squeezed out of business.

Over the last number of years many farmers have indeed been squeezed out of business. They have been caught in the cost price squeeze and have been forced off the farm. As a matter of fact, two or three years ago, the average net income for a farmer in Saskatchewan was not much more than a thousand dollars a year, that is going back to 1970-71. Many people had to leave the farms and this led to the decay of the rural society, the small communities and towns and many of the small business enterprises that served them.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if we are to stabilize farm income, if we are to have a secure agricultural economy and a secure food base in the future for our people, we must look at the cost to the farmer. We can do that in three or four different ways. First, the Food Prices Review Board must be expanded to become a Prices Review Board that will examine farm input costs in general rather than just the cost of food after it leaves the farm gate. I think the Food Prices Review Board should have the power to control selectively the prices of commodities when it appears that those prices are unjustifiably high.

Third, and I do not see why the government should not do this, I think the government ought to expand a program of selective pricing controls, to control the pricing of commodities we produce in this country and which we can control. For example, I am thinking of energy, with