

Oral Questions

Mr. Clark: If that is the specified intention, and if it will be the specified intention in the future, I presume the Prime Minister has established and circulated guidelines or specifications, and on behalf of the House I ask him to table those guidelines which are now in practice. If up to this point there have been none, would the Prime Minister tell us whether he is going to establish such guidelines and whether he will do the House of Commons the courtesy of tabling them here.

Mr. Trudeau: Such guidelines do exist. Whether they are written in a form which can be tabled is something I will have to ascertain. I do know that they are contained in instructions and in draft model agreements which are circulated by certain ministers, those who have Crown corporations under their command.

INQUIRY WHETHER AGENTS OF CROWN CORPORATIONS
FOLLOWING GUIDELINES

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): The Prime Minister has indicated that he is now taking a personal interest in these matters. I wonder if he would tell the House whether he is personally undertaking an investigation into the degree to which whatever specifications exist in the government of Canada are being honoured in practice and whether he will give us a commitment now that he will personally report to the House on the degree to which they have been honoured, the adequacy of the guidelines and specifications which exist and the detail of any specifications or new guidelines which he will cause to be put into place.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): It is not clear to me whether the question relates to whether these guidelines are honoured in other countries by agents chosen by us. As far as our people honouring these guidelines is concerned, that is, of course, the meaning of the guidelines themselves. When we sign a contract with an agent in another country we make it clear, in writing or otherwise, that money will be spent only for legal purposes. But in so far as the honouring of that contract, and knowledge of whether somebody in another country has broken the law in his country, of course we have no authority or ability to look into that matter.

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● (1450)

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

PROPOSED COMMISSION STUDY OF OPERATIONS IN
NEWFOUNDLAND—SUGGESTION RAILWAY PROBLEMS BE
TREATED SAME AS MARINE SERVICE

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Recently, the president of the CNR made a speech in Newfoundland stating that a commission had been set up to study the over-all transportation problems of that province and he suggested that the user-pay concept will place the CNR and the people of Newfoundland in a great deal of difficulty. Is the minister therefore prepared,

(a) to go ahead with the commission which is to study transportation problems and (b) treat the rail problems of the CNR in Newfoundland in the same manner as he treats the CNR operation of the marine service?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted the hon. member has noted that there are differences in relation to the way services are to be treated and that various principles of transportation and good business practices in transportation do not exclude special assistance for helping remote areas, areas of difficult access, where that is justified. That part of our policy is consistent with the over-all approach to transportation which requires transportation policies to be sensible and economic.

At this stage may I say that I have noted the suggestion of the president of the CNR in connection with a commission and will want to consider that carefully with my colleagues. It is, of course, a suggestion about a commission in which the government of the province of Newfoundland would be fully interested as well. I had some preliminary discussions with the minister of transport of the province earlier on the question of how best to approach the total transportation question in Newfoundland and whether, through a commission or otherwise, we can work together to produce the most effective transportation system for Newfoundland which money can buy.

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, may I ask a short supplementary question? The Minister of Transport proceeds to lecture everyone who asks him a question. My simple question was this: Is he prepared to treat the rail transport system in Newfoundland in the same manner as he treats the CNR marine services?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, that was not really and necessarily the total answer to the question and, whether the hon. member likes it or not, he cannot prescribe whether there shall be a yes or no answer to a question. I indicated to him that we would want to look at the transportation question in Newfoundland from the point of view of determining what kind of transport system can best be created for the good of Newfoundland. We would not want to waste a single dollar on transportation systems which do not benefit Newfoundland, because I am sure that we and Newfoundland together could find better uses for those dollars in Newfoundland than waste them on transportation which will bring no benefit.

Mr. Horner: Oh, go back to Saskatchewan university.

REFERENCE TO PREVIOUS STUDY OF RAILWAY OPERATIONS IN
NEWFOUNDLAND

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Transport? Would the minister remind Mr. Bandeen that a voluminous study commissioned by this government was undertaken last year of the transportation system of Newfoundland. Will the minister remind him to look at this study which has already elicited many facts which would help transportation in Newfoundland before he, the minister, camou-