

Oral Questions

Mr. Woolliams: I wonder if the hon. member for St. Boniface would keep quiet just for a moment.

I would like to ask if the royal commission is prepared to look into Crown corporations. I ask this particularly in light of the financial debacle of Air Canada and the fact that Air Canada and some other Crown corporations have in the past—this has been brought to light in our committees—had ambitions of various takeovers, and they are, of course, corporate bodies, the same as any other corporation.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as I read the terms of reference of the royal commission, one of which concerns the nature and role of major concentrations of corporate power in Canada, Crown corporations are not excluded.

● (1430)

Mr. Broadbent: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby on a point of order.

Mr. Woolliams: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: One supplementary question for the hon. member for Calgary North.

Mr. Woolliams: I take it that the terms of reference do include Crown corporations, without equivocation?

Mr. Baldwin: Ask your neighbour, Mitch.

Mr. Broadbent: The government and the Prime Minister—

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, there was so much noise in the Chamber that I do not know whether the Acting Prime Minister heard my question so I should like to put it again. Do the terms of reference, without equivocation, cover Crown corporations as well as other corporate bodies in Canada? We would like that clarified.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, in my previous answer I pointed out one of the terms of reference is:

... to inquire into, report upon, and make recommendations concerning:

(a) the nature and role of major concentrations of corporate power in Canada;

In so far as Crown corporations are corporations and are an aspect of corporate power, there is nothing to prevent them being inquired into. The hon. gentleman will realize, however, that those under public control are in a rather different position from those that are privately owned.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby on a point of order.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, since the Acting Prime Minister just quoted from what he called the terms of reference of the royal commission, I wonder if he would be good enough to table that so that all members of the House could see it and also have it appended to today's *Hansard*?

Mr. Sharp: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I only have it in one of the official languages but I can get a copy in French as well as

[Mr. Guay (St. Boniface).]

in English. Perhaps, I might have permission to table the copy in English now.

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COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE**SUBJECTS ON AGENDA WHICH MIGHT AFFECT CANADA—
INFORMALITY OF DISCUSSIONS**

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, my question was for the Prime Minister but since he has left I will put it to the Acting Prime Minister. With respect to the forthcoming Commonwealth conference to be held in the Caribbean, could the Acting Prime Minister inform the House and the country what areas of discussion are contemplated for that conference which might affect Canada and whether it is going to be an informal discussion with the major concern, as reported in today's press—how does one fire a cabinet minister?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think one of the great contributions of the Prime Minister to Commonwealth discussions is the degree of informality that he has introduced. That was very desirable—

Mr. Hees: Like sliding down a bannister!

Mr. Sharp: And it would be highly desirable that the informality of these meetings should be continued. I cannot say if there is any agenda but I would hope it would be as informal as possible so that there is a free exchange of views.

Mr. Hees: What is he going to do? A handstand on the city hall steps?

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TRANSPORT**REQUEST MINISTER DISALLOW PROPOSED FREIGHT RATE
INCREASES**

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister of Transport if there is one in the House today. On February 24, the minister said he was opposed to further horizontal increases in freight rates. Noting that the railways filed an increase set for May 5 which would bring the total percentage increase in rail freight rates to nearly 50 per cent in the first five months of this year, could the minister set an example by exercising the power and authority of his office or the authority of the government in overturning the CTC ruling which might uphold this further increase in freight rates?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Acting Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in replying for the Minister of Transport, I am not altogether certain that authority for railway freight rates rests with the minister except, I believe, in response to some kind of written submission or complaint from users or other citizens. I shall be glad to convey the question to the Minister of Transport, however, and try for a more detailed answer later.