

follow-up action with respect to prosecution. I can assure my hon. friend that we take this issue very seriously.

ROLE OF STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Transport. Quite apart from the criminal investigation and any ramifications that might flow therefrom, can the Minister assure this House that the Government supports the transportation committee in its continued but stalled examination into Air Canada matters, or are there reasons why the Government does not want the Committee to be convened at this time, after a two-week delay, such reasons being an imminent resignation or resignations?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I think it has been quite clear that we have always supported the active work of the Transport Committee. But I think the Hon. Member knows the rules of this House which are that committees set their own rules, decide their own agendas, and carry out their own activities.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Axworthy: While that may not be the standard the Hon. Member follows, I am sure it is the standard other Members of the Committee follow.

POSITION OF CHAIRMAN

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Transport. Does the Minister of Transport anticipate the resignation of Mr. Amyot?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): No, Madam Speaker.

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ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY

INCREASE IN TOLLS—APPLICATION OF GOVERNMENT RESTRAINT PROGRAM

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Bearing in mind that in the two years between 1978 to 1980 St. Lawrence Seaway tolls went up 100 per cent, that in 1982 they went up 18 per cent, and this year they have gone up another 10 per cent, making a total increase of 28 per cent in the last two years, and bearing in mind the cost price squeeze on farmers, whatever happened to six and five?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I think in part the answer to the question was contained in the question itself. The tolls are designed in order to maintain the Seaway. The tolls are based upon a user-pay concept. The users pay a charge which has not gone up

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exorbitantly compared to the over-all price of transportation across the country, and they are within the guidelines set by the Government.

Mr. Malone: Madam Speaker, knowing the Rules of this House, I will not comment on that despicable answer.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

REQUEST THAT MINISTER FREEZE TOLLS

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Transport a supplementary question. How is it that he can give such a flippant answer in light of the fact that there has been an enormous doubling and tripling of costs for farmers in the last five years? Farmers' receipts are the same as a decade ago. Bearing in mind that between 1976 and 1982 there has been a 115 per cent cost increase for farm producers and only a 36 per cent increase in receipts, and bearing in mind the Minister is dealing with a Crown corporation, will he freeze the tolls on the St. Lawrence Seaway because all farmers pay, with a reduced final payment on grain, whether or not they use the Seaway? Will the Minister freeze that cost, bearing in mind he is trying to make us pay five times as much for the Crow rate by 1991?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I want to repeat again that, according to the refinancing of the Seaway in 1977, the formula that is used is designed to make sure the Seaway is able to recover the cost of its normal operation, and that is subject to negotiation with the United States Government, which is also a partner in the Seaway. Those negotiations, of course, go on. I think it has been pointed out before that there has been no increase in lockage fees in the Welland Canal in that period of time. The pricing mechanism is reviewed annually. However, I would want to point out again, Madam Speaker, the constant inconsistency we receive from members of the Opposition. On the one hand the Leader of the Opposition stands up continually and says the Government is spending too much money, and then his Members get up and ask, "Why don't you spend more and have heavier subsidies?" You cannot have it both ways.

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FINANCE

RENEGOTIATION OF MORTGAGES THROUGH CROWN AGENCIES

Mr. G. M. Gurbin (Bruce-Grey): Madam Speaker, my question is directed through you to the Minister of Finance. Yesterday the Minister indicated that he would continue to put pressure on lending institutions to ensure they would allow renegotiation of mortgages with the traditional lending institutions for a three-month penalty charge. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has also indicated that she is looking at changes to the Interest Act. As the Minister of Finance is ultimately responsible for the Farm Credit Corporation and for the Federal Business Development Bank, could