

GRAIN

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY ON
MOVEMENT OF GRAIN AND BRANCH LINE ABANDONMENT

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the Minister of Transport is not here I will direct my question to the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. Since there is an urgent need to clarify government policy in respect of the rate structure, the degree of subsidization of grain movements and the levels of service railways will be required to provide in the future, is the government prepared at this time to make some statement before the end of the year as to its intention regarding the grain movement picture so far as western Canada is concerned?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, a great deal of the requirements of the railways and their obligations in respect of the movement of grain is spelled out in the law as it now stands. There is no intention to propose any immediate changes in those major areas. We have some need to take some action in respect of the question of rail lines within the prairie provinces which were subject to specific action some years ago, in maintaining them free from any application for abandonment. I would anticipate an announcement in that regard within the next several weeks.

Mr. Murta: Having regard to the last part of the minister's answer about requests for abandonment of various lines, does the minister foresee an announcement in the near future, possibly sometime in January, and is the government giving any consideration to an interim phasing out, or a slowdown in an interim period during which the whole branch line picture as far as the phasing out aspect in concerned will be looked at more closely than at the present time, having regard to the kind of situation that could develop in western Canada?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, we want to re-emphasize our basic position that no change to any significant degree in respect of rail services to an area should take place without a full opportunity for the interests of the area and of the people involved to be canvassed and examined. It is important for us to know what are the plans of the various elevator companies in respect of the maintenance of their facilities, and the plans of the farmers and their wishes to deliver to those facilities. We want to see that all of those matters are examined before any significant steps are taken in relation to a change in the railway set up in the west.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

CANADIAN POSITION ON USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS—
SUGGESTED RELUCTANCE OF UNITED STATES TO USE
NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN DEFENCE OF EUROPE

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence, but first may I say I was disappointed and surprised that on his return from the NATO defence ministers' conference he did not make a statement on motions. During the recent

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meeting the Netherlands' minister suggested a reduction in tactical nuclear weapons, opposed by Canada. Let me quote from the *Gazette* under the headline "Canada supports NATO A-weapons" as follows:

Canada lined up with a majority against the suggestion . . .

Apparently Canada was against the suggestion that we reduce nuclear weapons in Europe. This is clearly a change in policy. Mr. Cadieux said, as reported in *Hansard* of December 8, 1969:

Speaking for Canada, I supported the adoption of those papers which further define and restrict the circumstances under which nuclear weapons might be used.

Would the minister confirm and explain this change in policy?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, Canada is not involved in the discussions with European allies about the use of nuclear weapons. We do not use nuclear weapons ourselves in Europe. The hon. member has quoted another country's policy, not Canada's policy.

Mr. McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Secretary of Defence, Mr. Schlesinger stated at the same conference that NATO can no longer count on the United States umbrella to protect it. Did the minister consider this to be a reference to a growing United States reluctance to use nuclear weapons in a ground defence role in western Europe?

Mr. Richardson: No, Mr. Speaker. I think it was made very clear that if necessary or required the United States was prepared to use tactical nuclear weapons in Europe.

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● (1540)

[Translation]

PENITENTIARIES

SUGGESTED TIGHTER CONTROL OF DRUGS IN INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Solicitor General of Canada.

Since, in an interview he was giving last weekend, the vice-president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada for the Quebec area stated with supporting evidence that some 40 per cent of inmates in the penitentiaries of Quebec, including so-called maximum security institutions, take drugs at least once a week thus endangering the guards' lives, is the minister prepared to take immediate action and once and for all have stricter control over all visitors since it is among them, it seems, that we find the hashish, LSD and marihuana smugglers?

[English]

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I must point out immediately that I think the figures quoted in respect of drugs in penitentiaries is high. Although it is true we have had a problem, especially in medium and minimum institutions, we have introduced in the last few years important measures to prevent the