

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): There is an expression in English, Mr. Speaker, which says one must avoid "killing crops" around the world. Whenever I have good news I will be delighted to bring it to the attention of the house.

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce inform the house whether or not it is a fact that written into the International Grains Agreement there is a provision giving Sweden, the European Common Market, Spain and Turkey special privileges in relation to part of the transportation costs which allows them to undercut Canada, the United States and Australia?

Mr. Pepin: I had explained to me on a number of occasions in recent months the bag of tricks which can be used, but I would not like to point the finger at any one country in particular.

Mr. Horner: A supplementary question. I am not pointing the finger at any one country. The minister read and signed the contract for Canada, and I am asking him whether there was written into it a provision that gave relief on part of the transportation costs for certain countries?

Mr. Pepin: I signed no contract for Canada. To what contract is the hon. member referring?

Mr. Horner: You may have signed no contract, but your department or somebody in it did, and you must have read the contract.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Horner: The minister should inform the house.

TRANSPORTREQUEST FOR PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO
RAILWAY SAFETY

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, since the minister is in the house today may I direct a question to the Minister of Transport that is supplementary to those asked yesterday. Can the minister advise the house whether he will be instituting an inquiry into the alarming frequency of railway mishaps, and has he any information to give the house in this regard?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Yes, Mr. Speaker. A special inquiry has already commenced into the most

recent accident in New Brunswick. The inquiry is being headed by Commissioner J. M. Woodard, himself a former railwayman, and it is already under way.

In addition, over the past several months consultations have been going on between representatives of the commission and the railways for the purpose of examining all the railway accidents that occurred in 1968 and those that occurred in the first quarter of 1969. Out of the findings of these discussions and the internal inquiry, if that is the appropriate phrase, a decision will be made as to whether a public inquiry is then necessary.

As for the most recent accident, no decision has yet been made on a public inquiry, for the obvious reason that an inquest into the unfortunate deaths must be held, and an inquiry would have to come subsequent to that inquest.

Mr. Benjamin: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. May I ask the minister whether the special inquest into individual mishaps or any possible public inquiry will include an investigation into the adequacy of maintenance and inspection of railway trackage and rolling stock?

Mr. Jamieson: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is part of the responsibility of the Canadian Transport Commission to do just that, and that is part of the investigation that is now under way.

ATLANTIC PROVINCES POLICY

Mr. Charles H. Thomas (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Transport. Now that the chairman of the Canadian Transport Commission has stated that he hopes a decision on new transportation policies for the Atlantic provinces will not be too long delayed, will the minister advise the house what progress his department is making in drafting new legislation for an over-all Atlantic province transportation policy?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there has been a considerable amount of progress. I propose to meet with representatives of the Atlantic provinces on Monday, including I hope the premiers of some of the provinces who may be available. The drafting of the legislation will proceed as quickly as possible following these consultations, with the hope of introducing it very soon.

Mr. Thomas (Moncton): A supplementary question to the Minister of Transport. Will