

Oral Questions

INVESTIGATION OF MURDERER'S INCOME

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, my supplementary is to the seatmate of the Solicitor General, the Minister of National Revenue. Can he confirm or deny that an investigation is taking place to ascertain if a good portion of the income of Clifford Robert Olson, a convicted killer, over the last six years was moneys received from police in regard to information, that a further investigation is taking place to see if the \$90,000 already paid to a trust fund can be construed as income and, finally, whether this is being done in spite of a clause in the agreement which protected Olson and his dependants from any tax investigations or any claim of return of any portion of those funds to the Crown?

Hon. William Rompkey (Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, the hon. member will know that it is improper for me to discuss the affairs of any taxpayer in Canada in this House or publicly.

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RAILWAYS

CROWSNEST PASS RATE—ANNOUNCEMENT OF MINISTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Transport about press reports, which I suspect were carefully planted, that he will be holding a press conference in Winnipeg at 10 a.m. Monday to announce the strategy for proposed changes in the Crowsnest Pass rate. If that is correct, since the Premier of Saskatchewan has called for a grain summit meeting later this month to which the four western provinces, the Canadian Wheat Board and the Prime Minister have been invited and which, in all probability, the minister will attend, will he at least have the courtesy, and avoid deliberately bypassing the provinces, to delay any announcements until such time as that grain summit has been held? It will include discussions of the Crow rates, so the minister could take into consideration the consultation and discussions at that summit meeting.

● (1440)

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, on the subject of courtesy, I do not think we have a lesson to learn from the government of Saskatchewan. The Premier of Saskatchewan called that summit conference on grain without consulting with the Prime Minister or with any member of his cabinet. Perhaps the criticism should be directed a different way, at least concerning this particular item.

The Prime Minister, in answer to a question by the Premier of Saskatchewan concerning that subject, said that the discussion on marketing and other aspects of grain could very well take place at the conference which is now taking place, and that a decision would be taken then as to the federal participation in the so-called summit conference.

Concerning the subject of an early announcement which the newspapers have reported that I would be making, I can only

quote that the Prime Minister is purported to have said, according to press reports: "I can tell you today that we are very close to a final decision on how we plan to proceed on western transportation. Within a few weeks, the federal government will propose a set of principles, a more precise allocation of funds, and a process of consultation with those concerned, particularly western Canadians."

Mr. Hnatyshyn: It is called bringing western Canada to its knees.

FUTURE FREIGHT RATES TO BE PAID BY FARMERS

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Madam Speaker, the minister knows that there is no way that all aspects of grain, such as grain transportation and grain marketing, could be raised at the first ministers' conference. He knows that perfectly well.

The minister has claimed that there is a consensus for changing the Crow rate when two provinces oppose it. The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities and cow-calf operators also oppose changing the Crow. Therefore the minister's version of the consensus is about the same as that between a bank manager and John Dillinger.

An hon. Member: Will the real John Dillinger stand up?

Mr. Benjamin: I would like to ask the minister if his bargaining position is that the grain freight rates paid by farmers will double by the end of 1982, triple by the end of 1984 and quadruple by the end of 1986?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I am obviously not in a position to reveal the contents of the announcement which the Prime Minister said would be made sometime in February. However, any sort of prediction based on what is not known would not be of great value.

Mr. Epp: Give him a bodyguard.

Mr. Pepin: This is what my friend, the hon. member, has done for the last week. He has been drawing conclusions from an announcement which has not been made. He speaks about 50,000 jobs which would be lost, without any reference to reality whatsoever. It is just a figure that he picked from the mirror while shaving one morning.

However, concerning the consensus business, I think that in order to contribute to the debate my friend should make a number of distinctions. There is a consensus in western Canada on a change which must take place in order to remedy the coming situation in western grain transportation. There is unanimity in western Canada on that subject, and he knows that very well. Therefore, one will have different degrees of consensus depending on the subject which is debated at any particular time.