

cannot be right. This matter is either under B.C. provincial jurisdiction, or federal jurisdiction.

Quite apart from the problem of federal access to the Roberts Bank port, but very relevant to the problem, is the federal government's interest in regional planning and the conservation and development of Canada's natural resources, both from the standpoint of productivity and of human environment.

In a matter of such great significance to our province and indeed to the whole of this country I submit that the federal government owes the members of this house, the people of British Columbia and all the people of Canada an explanation on this point. I believe we should have a statement concerning the government's intentions. I honestly believe that the federal government is no longer in a position to evade this matter, and leave it to the provincial government to hold the whip hand in respect of this Roberts Bank situation.

**Mr. Yves Forest (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, we are grateful to the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) for having deferred this question until last Thursday, at the request of the government, to be answered by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer). Then, due to the untimely death of the premier of the province of Quebec and the adjournment of the house on Thursday, there was no opportunity for the hon. member to raise her point and for the Minister of Transport to reply. Regrettably both the Minister of Transport and the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Richardson) had engagements which required their presence outside the house this evening.

The Minister of Transport has received many briefs from parties concerned with the rail route to Roberts Bank, in particular a detailed report from the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board. He is presently studying all these briefs. The constitutional aspects of this question are still under review. It would appear from the evidence, on the basis of the representations received, that the constitutional aspect concerns the effect on regional planning and urban development by the rail route selected by the B.C. Hydro and Power Authority. For these reasons it would appear that the matter is one involving the jurisdiction of the provincial government in the area of regional planning, and neither the

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effectiveness nor the ineffectiveness of transportation to Roberts Bank.

#### TRANSPORT—POTASH—REQUEST FOR INQUIRY INTO FREIGHT RATE

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville):** Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday I directed the following question to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer):

In view of the serious consequences to railway services and employees in Saskatchewan from the proposed changes in transportation of potash by I.M.C. of Esterhazy, is it the intention of the minister to call for an inquiry into the freight rate structure for the transportation of potash to the United States and overseas markets?

I asked this question for a number of reasons. It also related to a question I had asked previously concerning what the government intends to do to avoid any serious repercussions which might arise when they start trucking potash. Their intention is to truck potash from Esterhazy to the United States border, where it will be loaded on to freight trains for delivery to Chicago and other United States markets.

If potash is moved by truck, naturally some of the railway employees in the area will be laid off and there will be serious repercussions in the whole region. The hon. member for Regina Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin), the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) and I had a three day visit to the area where we spoke to many of the people involved in the potash industry, and other workers as well. The main complaint the people in the potash industry had concerned the high cost of transportation.

In directing this question to the minister I have in mind that if the rail rates for the shipment of potash were lower the company might be encouraged to ship more of the product on the railway system through Melville. I ask this question in the interests of the employees in the railway industry.

• (10:10 p.m.)

**Mr. Yves Forest (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) previously raised this question in the house the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer) relayed his concern to the management of the Canadian National Railways. Since this is a business venture on the part of the mining company and the transportation companies, it is natural that there should be negotiation between the parties so a compromise can be reached as to the cost of transportation services. These