

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Sharp:** Mr. Speaker, I doubt the premise of this question but I shall make inquiries. I know I would have no difficulty in visiting troops upon request, and I am sure none of my colleagues would have any difficulty either.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, I would not want to place myself on as high a level as the Secretary of State for External Affairs, but this morning a request was made by my office for a visit on my part to Canadian forces, not in areas in Egypt but in Israel, and the reply was that under no circumstances would anyone from Canada be allowed to visit the forces. Indeed, it was added that this included the Minister of National Defence. As the minister apparently agrees that there should be no such denial, will he immediately get in touch with the forces, because I should like to visit those who serve my country, as in the past I have had that privilege.

**Mr. Sharp:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure I speak for all members of the House when I say that I would not want the right hon. gentleman to put himself in a position of danger, and I am sure this can be the only consideration that prevails. If he would like to visit the troops I will see what I can do, but I certainly would not encourage him to go where there is a lot of shooting. We really would like to have him back.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Is that the reason the minister does not go?

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**TRANSPORT****STEPS TO OBTAIN RETURN OF BOXCARS FROM UNITED STATES—POSSIBLE INCREASE IN PER DIEM RATE**

**Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. In the continuing saga of the shortage of railway cars, and in the light of information given recently that the shortage of railway cars has detained the movement of lumber causing an increase in the price of housing and other buildings, not mentioning other materials, can the minister tell the House what steps he is taking now to assure return to Canada of Canadian railway cars that are kept in the United States as warehouses thus denying Canada use of them? Can the minister tell the House what steps he has taken to get them back?

**Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, last week I met with the railways and the shippers association in order to see if there were things we could do that we were not doing in order to increase the number of freight cars in Canada. One of the things that was suggested was that we get in touch with the American government to see if they could exercise pressure on the railways to have those cars sent back to Canada. We are going to do this through the Department of External Affairs.

**Mr. Howard:** A supplementary question. Rather than relying on the diplomacy or the lack of it, whichever it may be, on the part of the Department of External Affairs, does the minister think that it might be more appropriate

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

to raise the per diem rate charged to American railroads so that they do not have the gift of Canadian boxcars for \$7 a day, to use them as warehouses? Would that not be a more direct way?

**Mr. Marchand (Langelier):** Mr. Speaker, this is another way but the problem is to know what the impact would be on prices in Canadian markets abroad, if you have an idea of this. We would lose customers because of the new price to be paid by customers, there is no doubt about that.

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**HOUSING****NEWFOUNDLAND—POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM TO RURAL AREAS**

**Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of State for Urban Affairs in charge of housing. In view of the fact citizens living in substandard homes are finding it difficult to bring them up to standard because of the cost involved, and in view of the increase in the cost of building materials, can the minister indicate what progress is being made in extending the residential rehabilitation program to include those citizens living in rural areas, in light of the policy announced recently?

**Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of State for Urban Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, we have had consultations with some of the provinces, and with the particular province that the hon. member has in mind. Discussions are going on at the official level as to the application of a rural housing program for Newfoundland.

**Mr. Marshall:** A supplementary question. Can the minister give a definite date as to when the program can be announced which would be directed to those people who are suffering today?

**Mr. Basford:** No, I could not, Mr. Speaker.

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**AIR TRANSPORT****STRIKE BY FIREFIGHTERS AT VANCOUVER AIRPORT—REQUEST FOR REPORT**

**Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George—Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. In light of the recent inflationary trend and labour unrest in Canada, I understand that the minister may have had some problems to solve in a minor situation that existed in Vancouver and has now spread to other centres with the firefighters who are tying up Department of Transport airports, has the minister anything to report this morning to the House on the situation as it stands? What we can expect in the next few days?

**Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, there were negotiations late last week between the Treasury Board and representatives of the alliance. I know that tomorrow the firefighters will be called upon to vote on the proposal or the solution that has been reached