

minister tell us whether a decision has been taken or will soon be taken as to the request for subsidies for that service by Eastern Provincial Airways for the next financial year?

[English]

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I hope to be in a position to communicate that information very soon to the airlines providing service in that area. I share the hon. member's concern to ensure that, indeed, service is continued.

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### RAILWAYS

#### PRAC RECOMMENDATIONS RESPECTING RAIL LINE ABANDONMENT

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. My understanding is that the minister has had in his office since November 30 a report from the Prairie Rail Action Committee—known as PRAC—which sources indicate contains a recommendation for the abandonment of 60 per cent of the 2,400 miles of line which it studied.

Can the minister inform the House when he intends to make that report public so that farmers will know whether the lines they utilize will be axed or safeguarded within the basic network?

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, indeed I have the final report from the Prairie Rail Action Committee. In the earlier cases, a good number of its decisions came in single report form and we were able to take our own decisions regarding them and announce them fairly quickly. In this particular case the report is very comprehensive, including all of the remaining lines under consideration by the Prairie Rail Action Committee. Also, it includes very extensive documentation on the manner in which the committee proceeded and the theoretical basis upon which it approached each line.

We are analysing it for our own purposes in order to decide what we have to do; in addition, we are in the process of printing the report. It will be made public and the decisions will be announced as soon as the printed report is available.

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### AGRICULTURE

#### AGREEMENT WITH MANITOBA FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Last Friday, the Government of Canada and the government of the province of Manitoba signed an agreement for agricultural development. We have had similar agreements under PFRA, especially in the interlake region. Many of us have attempted to obtain an agreement for southeastern Manitoba to have agricultural

#### Privilege—Mr. Yewchuk

development go forward in that area. I understand southeastern Manitoba was included in the agreement. When is the agreement to take effect? What specific proposals are being made in the agreement regarding agricultural development?

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, the agreement takes effect April 1. That is why the signing took place the other day in Ottawa between myself, the minister in charge of DREE and the minister of agriculture for the province of Manitoba.

The province and the federal government will be spending approximately \$9 million for drainage programs, diking, etc. That will include the part of the province of Manitoba to which the hon. member referred. The agreement is over a dozen pages long. It outlines each area for crop research, forage research, livestock testing programs, etc. It is quite a detailed agreement. I would think it is a public document and that it can be made available to the hon. member for study.

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### PRIVILEGE

#### MR. YEWCHUK—COMMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO MINISTER OF NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE TO INDIAN DELEGATION

**Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege concerning a matter of great importance and urgency which reflects unfavourably on all members of this House.

On Friday last, representatives of the National Indian Brotherhood and of the maritime Indian chiefs had a meeting with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Robinson), since the minister did not have the time to meet with them. The meeting was cut short by the division bells at 3.30 p.m. and an arrangement was made to reconvene on Tuesday to continue the discussions. As the Indian representatives were leaving the parliamentary secretary's office, words were uttered which the delegation found offensive. The words were as follows:

Maybe when we meet next Tuesday, you can wear your feathers.

● (1502)

The Indian representatives felt this was a racial slur against them and an insult to all Indian people in this country, and that these words were unbecoming of a member of this House. They have asked me to raise this matter in the House on a question of privilege in order to give the member or perhaps the minister a chance to retract that statement and to apologize to the Indian people as well as to members in this House.

[Translation]

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, obviously I cannot prejudge what my parliamentary secretary has said or has not said. Hence I will let him clarify himself this part of the question. However, I can assure the House that the first part of the statement of the