

Manitoba Indian Brotherhood in order that it can carry on its day to day duties while working out the problems it faces?

**Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Speaker, in reply to that question I want to indicate to the hon. member that this funding not only relates to funding from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development but also from the department of my colleague, the Secretary of State and Minister of Communications.

There is an audited deficit of some \$440,000. There is also a loan which was guaranteed by my department of \$250,000. The status of the situation at present is this. I met with some representatives of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood late last night in Quebec City and indicated to them that we would want to have a complete audit of the operations of the MIB before money would be released. I had discussions with my cabinet colleague, the Secretary of State and Minister of Communications, this morning and we have agreed that until this has been done the money will not be released. In addition, a meeting of the chiefs in Manitoba has been called for the first days of December, at which time they will take action in terms of both the presidency and the executive members of MIB. Once they have done that and have given us a plan, we will move forward.

**Mr. Murphy:** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is, of course, related to the fact that they cannot hold that chiefs' meeting in Winnipeg without funding. How does the minister expect the organization to bring chiefs in from all parts of Manitoba or plan that meeting without any funding?

**Mr. Epp:** Mr. Speaker, I have to indicate to the hon. member that, while representatives of the MIB yesterday requested funding to be released in the order of \$138,000, they did not make the point to me yesterday that the chiefs' meeting at the beginning of December could not go forward if that funding was not in their hands prior to December. What they did indicate to me was that there would be extreme difficulty for the 30 employees with MIB in terms of their future employment should that funding not come forward.

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## TRANSPORT

### INQUIRY INTO MISSISSAUGA DISASTER—REPORT THEREON

**Mr. John McDermid (Brampton-Georgetown):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. It was rumoured this morning in the Toronto *Sun* that the inquiry scheduled to begin in Mississauga on December 4, conducted by the Canadian Transport Commission, has been cancelled. Could the minister give us a status report on that hearing?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in the committee on transport and communications yesterday, it is the government's intention to proceed with a full and independent inquiry under the In-

quiries Act. At the present time, officials of Transport Canada are meeting with representatives of the provincial government and the city of Mississauga to develop the terms of reference and the mechanism which would be best suited to looking into all aspects of the Mississauga incident.

[Translation]

VIA RAIL—RATES IN OTTAWA AND MONTREAL REGIONS

**Mr. Marcel Roy (Laval):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Transport. Since November 19 last, VIA Rail has increased its fares substantially between Montreal, Coteau and Alexandria, and from Alexandria to Ottawa. When I say it has increased its return fares substantially, that represents an increase of 60 per cent over previous rates. Considering that a service improvement and car overhauling program coupled with a promotion program urging Canadians to use this public service initiated under the previous government were already giving encouraging results, how can he justify this attitude on the part of VIA Rail with respect to this increase that I find scandalous?

[English]

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, this government is, indeed, encouraging the revitalization of rail passenger services throughout Canada. We are examining all the service needs, not based simply on the matter of how much money we can spend but in terms of trying to rationalize the services so that the regional and local needs of the people will be met. I will certainly undertake to look into the matter of increased rates. I will discuss the matter with Mr. Roberts or the hon. member might be interested in appearing before the committee when Mr. Roberts will be there, at which time he can put the question directly to him.

[Translation]

MONTREAL AND SUBURBS—FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL MEETING TO CONTINUE SERVICE

**Hon. Francis Fox (Blainville-Deux-Montagnes):** Mr. Speaker, in late August or early September the minister met with his provincial counterpart to discuss commuter problems in the Montreal area. I would like to know whether the minister can confirm today that he still intends to conclude an agreement with his counterpart of the province of Quebec by the end of December to ensure the continuity of public transport between downtown Montreal and the city of Deux-Montagnes as well as on other commuter lines on both the north and south shores of Montreal.

[English]

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, these discussions are going on at the officials' level. It would still be my hope that we would be able to reach an agreement by the end of December. As the hon. member knows, there has been a change in the membership of the