

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

will be very happy to deal with any questions the Leader of the Opposition has to raise about anything that was said last night, and deal with them thoroughly.

**CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY**

REVELSTOKE, B.C.—INQUIRY AS TO RE-EMPLOYMENT OF NON-OPERATING EMPLOYEES

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Transport, arising out of the assurance given by the railway companies and by the minister to parliament that railway workers would be taken back without discrimination following the passage of Bill No. C-45. Can the minister comment on the report that the Canadian Pacific Railway in the Revelstoke area have returned none of the former non-operating employees to their jobs, and that this situation has resulted in a serious deterioration in safety appliances consequently endangering the safety of both workers and the public?

**Hon. Leon Balcer (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I am afraid I cannot comment on this situation because this is the first time I have heard about it. I am unaware of the facts put forward by my hon. friend.

**Mr. Argue:** Will the minister accept the question as notice and give me an answer at a later time?

**Mr. Balcer:** Very good, Mr. Speaker.

**PUBLIC SERVICE**

POSTAL EMPLOYEES—REPORTED REDUCTION IN STATUTORY HOLIDAYS

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Azellus Denis (St. Denis):** Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Postmaster General. According to this morning's newspapers the Post Office Department have decided that the list of statutory holidays will be reduced by two, namely Christmas day and New Year's day. I should like to know from the minister whether this information is well founded. If so, what will happen to those employees who normally work on Sunday if they decide to be absent from their work? Are they to be deprived of their salaries because these two days are no longer on the list of statutory holidays?

**Hon. W. M. Hamilton (Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal more confidence in our post office employees than the hon. member for St. Denis, and I am quite sure that none of them who would be expected to work on any particular day that is

[Mr. Fleming (Eglinton).]

their responsibility would be absent except for legitimate cause such as sickness. Therefore this is no concern of ours.

Having said that, in answering the other part of the question may I say the fact that Christmas day and New Year's day fall on Sunday this year and that the following day, the Monday, has been declared a holiday for civil service purposes, would mean that those of our employees who regularly work on Sunday would be denied certain benefits due to them from having to work on a holiday. This is being taken care of by allowing them to work up a corresponding amount of overtime in the week preceding the holiday, so that there is no injustice whatsoever.

I am very glad the hon. member for St. Denis brought up the question because while I am quite sure the newspaper report was well founded in that it printed the information it received, someone who did not have truth as the basis gave the wrong information to the newspaper.

(Translation):

CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER—RECRUITMENT OF STAFF

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Lucien Cardin (Richelieu-Vercheres):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Secretary of State. Could he tell the house whether it is normal procedure for the civil service commission to recruit stenographers for the chief electoral officer, as revealed in a letter of the commission dated December 21 and signed by the secretary.

(Text):

The chief electoral officer of Canada requires the services of a number of clerks 4 with stenographic ability on 24 hours' notice following any announcement of a general election. There is, of course, little prior indication regarding the time an election may be held.

(Translation):

Would the minister also tell us whether this is an indication that an election can be expected shortly?

(Text):

**Mr. Speaker:** The second part of the question, of course, would not be admissible, but I do not intend to deprive the minister of an opportunity to reply to the first part of the question.

(Translation):

**Hon. Noel Dorion (Secretary of State):** Mr. Speaker, as far as the last part of the question is concerned, it is obvious that my colleague cannot decently expect an answer, because this is a matter for the government to decide.

As to the first part, I am sorry, but I have not quite followed the question, and if my