

Mr. Horner (Acadia):—have withdrawn all applications for abandonment of rail lines?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Assumptions or conclusions are not questions.

[Later:]

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): I have a question for the Minister of Transport. Is the minister aware that the Canadian Pacific has made application to abandon certain lines in Manitoba. Could he use his good offices to remind the Canadian Pacific that this is contrary to government policy.

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think I had better inform myself on this subject.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pickersgill: My understanding was that the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian National had told the Board of Transport Commissioners that they were withdrawing all applications for the protected lines and that they would in due course furnish information which might be required by the commission with respect to the unprotected lines. It also was my understanding that there would be no hearings in these matters until after the protective system comes into effect, which would be on passage of the act.

Mr. L. R. Sherman (Winnipeg South): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister not been advised by the Manitoba Branch Lines Association that the Canadian Pacific is in the process of making these recommendations now?

Mr. Pickersgill: I had representations from the Manitoba Branch Lines Association and I am looking into those representations. As the hon. member knows, the Board of Transport Commissioners is a court of record and I have the greatest confidence that they will proceed in accordance with the law and policies which have been laid down.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

VANCOUVER, B.C.—REGULATIONS DENYING BENEFITS TO FISHERMEN

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I posed a question to the Minister of Labour regarding the application of unemployment insurance to fishermen on the west coast, as a result of changes in regulations, and the minister replied that he would have

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preferred to have notice. I am wondering whether he is now in a position to reply.

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the answer I gave yesterday stands. I had not received any such letter until I obtained a copy from my hon. friend, the hon. member for Skeena. The original was received by my department yesterday. It was marked as received in Ottawa yesterday, though it was dated December 7. The letter has been acknowledged and the matter is being looked into.

[Translation]

SHIPPING

USE OF RUSSIAN ICEBREAKER IN ST. LAWRENCE RIVER

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, I wish to put a question to the right hon. Prime Minister.

Can the Prime Minister tell the house—

An hon. Member: He cannot do that, he is gone.

Mr. Grégoire: To the Minister of Transport then. Can he tell the house whether it is true that—I see two members have just left, Mr. Speaker, but that will not change anything, because they never speak and never do anything—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Transport whether it is true that the Russian government recently announced that a Russian icebreaker would be assigned to the St. Lawrence river next winter in order to make winter shipping easier for Russian ships on that river?

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am not a spokesman for the Russian government.

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. This information is taken from an editorial published in the Toronto *Telegram* of December 10, that is last Saturday, and I should like to know whether there is any truth in the statement of that editorial to the effect that a Russian icebreaker will come and clear the St. Lawrence river for winter shipping, and whether the Department of Transport is aware—

Mr. Speaker: Order. This question is out of order.

Mr. Grégoire: Ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker.