

Mr. Douglas A. Hogarth (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the security planning and research group in the Department of the Solicitor General has not participated in any way whatsoever with respect to the so-called Geoffroy case. In suggesting in his question that the group would be giving advice to the Solicitor General (Mr. Goyer) regarding the penitentiary service and parole board, the hon. member has totally misconstrued the remarks made by the Solicitor General on September 21 of last year with respect to the function of this group. I would invite the hon. member to re-read the remarks made by the Solicitor General at that time and he will see that this group is engaged in studies and analyses of information pertaining only to internal security and not to such matters as are involved in the Geoffroy case.

If the hon. member were to re-read carefully the remarks made by the Solicitor General he would see that many of the questions that this evening he has added to his original question have been answered. As he is aware, the extreme time limitation imposed on me this evening and the lack of prior notice of his questions prevent my giving an adequate answer at this time. I suggest that the hon. member attend the appropriate committee when the estimates of the Solicitor General are before the House. At that time he will have an opportunity to extend the questions he has put on the record tonight.

• (2200)

It seems odd that there is so much mystery over this particular group. When the supplementary estimates were before the House last fall and the matter came before the committee, none of the questions put by the hon. member were presented to the Solicitor General.

TRANSPORT—SUGGESTED DELAY IN CLOSING OF CERTAIN SASKATCHEWAN STATIONS

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, on February 29 I asked the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) a question regarding the suggested delay in closing certain Saskatchewan stations in so far as the customer service plan is concerned. At that time he said he would be glad to sift through all questions in *Hansard* to find the various representations and would do his best to follow them up. I hope the parliamentary secretary can indicate tonight that he has sifted through and followed up the suggestions in the questions asked.

We hear a lot about industrial peace. We hear a lot about a government and a labour department that wants good labour-management relationships. We read and listen to pious remarks about proper recognition of the rights of labour and the rights of management. Then we see and read a decision by the railway transport committee concerning the removal of 56 agents, nine caretakers and four caretaker-agents from Saskatchewan and four agents and three caretakers from stations in the province of Alberta, all from the Canadian Pacific Railway Company.

What are the facts, and why would one be concerned after a review by the railway transport committee which rubber-stamped the earlier decision? The review was held at three points in Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Battleford

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and Wynyard from December 1 to December 11, 1971. Hundreds of pages of testimony were heard by one commissioner. The commissioner repeated the fact he was taking and listening to testimony from all the witnesses and at a later date this evidence would be considered by other members of the commission and a decision rendered. On February 10 a decision was handed down rescinding the application by the government of Saskatchewan and giving the CPR the go ahead to implement its customer service plan on March 16.

What happened then, and why did it happen? The CPR moved ahead without regard to the social element involved in such an implementation. Can one imagine such inhumane treatment to employees expected to move their families if they wanted to be with them in the middle of March? Can you imagine a wife trying to shovel coal and haul ashes from some old, hand-fired furnace while her husband is hundreds of miles away if in fact he is one of the 50 per cent who may be still fortunate enough to have a job? Why did the commission not recognize the social consequences of long-standing employees and their families? What type of society do we live in, with such callous treatment from the hands of appointed boards and employers?

On the other hand, on the Laurentian division in Quebec an order approving the customer-service plan was handed down on January 17. However, the CPR is not implementing that service until May 1, which is realistic. Why the inconsistency in these two applications as far as implementation is concerned? Can the minister not have some input into a reasonable approach to such changes? Cannot the Minister of Labour (Mr. O'Connell) or his industry specialists bring reason and consideration to bear on the railway company? Are we concerned about industrial peace, or do we not give a damn? Surely there is responsibility on the part of government to use all means to bring about fair and proper treatment. Surely this government can move on its own initiative and not let an unfeeling and cold decision develop into bitterness and strife on our railroad.

All I ask is that this government, the minister and the parliamentary secretary use their authority to at least delay the implementation of the Saskatoon customer-service plan until June so at least families can make plans for the disruption which is evident. Let us not hear an argument quoting how people can appeal the decision. Surely there is room for reasonable men to deal with a reasonable proposal. Surely two months is not an unrealistic time to ask for in this situation.

I ask the parliamentary secretary tonight to make some representations to his minister. I ask him at least to get the minister to re-read the question I asked in this House on February 29 and to try to bring about a reasonable solution to a situation that could erupt into direct conflict between management and labour, which would not do either the nation or the economy any good whatever.

Mr. Gérard Duquet (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Skoberg) for the opportunity of responding to this question. I know it is an important matter to him and to other hon. members.