

Inquiries of the Ministry

and so on, then he will be given top priority for such employment. I do not think any hon. member can believe that the Canadian National Railways are acting in any way that is not completely fair in respect to this whole matter.

Mr. Chevrier: I am not suggesting that they are, but I would like to know if the minister could tell us how many of these people who are being laid off are being re-employed?

Mr. Hees: Just as many as it is possible to re-employ in the new work that is being undertaken this summer, and just as many as are willing to do that kind of new work.

PRIVILEGE

MR. HERRIDGE—REFERENCE TO STATEMENT IN DEBATE ON JUNE 12

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): I trust I am in order, Mr. Speaker, because I want to rise on a question of privilege. When my bill to amend the Railway Act was under discussion yesterday afternoon the Minister of Transport, as reported at page 1075 of *Hansard*, said as follows:

I have discussed the amendment with the board and its opinion is that the Railway Act already gives the board jurisdiction to prevent unwarranted reduction of train service and to entertain applications and complaints of municipalities and other interested parties regarding the adequacy of existing train service and any changes that may be proposed. In a word, the board considers that the amendment would not give to it powers that it does not now hold.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to quote from a letter I have received from Mr. C. W. Rump, acting secretary of the board—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member would first indicate what is his question of privilege.

Mr. Herridge: My question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, is that the minister misinformed the house with respect to the value of my amendment. The minister claimed my amendment did not give the board additional powers, but the letter from the board indicates—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Herridge:—that it would have given additional powers.

Mr. Speaker: It seems to me that is a matter which should have been disposed of in the debate yesterday. After all, it is a question of opinion and argument. The hon.

[Mr. Hees.]

member and others spoke in the debate. This question of privilege is raised with respect to something which was said in that debate, and which was said before the hon. member closed the debate.

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Laurier): May I rise on this question because, unfortunately I was not here yesterday. I looked at the statement made by the minister and that made by the hon. member who is now raising the question of privilege, and it was not possible for the hon. member to raise this question yesterday during the course of the debate. He has here in his hand, I am informed, a letter from the secretary of the board of transport commissioners indicating a position contrary to that taken by the minister. I feel he should be allowed to put it on the record, and the minister should be allowed to make a statement indicating what his position is vis-à-vis that of the secretary of the board of transport commissioners. I believe this procedure would be as fair to the minister as it would be to the hon. member.

Hon. Howard C. Green (Minister of Public Works): May I point out that in this debate yesterday the hon. member for Kootenay West made his opening speech. The Minister of Transport also spoke, and the hon. member for Kootenay West closed the debate. That was his chance to bring up any answer. Surely he is not entitled to do so now under the guise of a question of privilege and make a further reply to something that was said yesterday. If he had other material he should have brought it to the attention of the house yesterday.

Mr. Herridge: I was going to ask the minister a question. Would he consult with the board and inform the house who is correct?

Mr. Speaker: I will permit that question to be asked, but we are departing from the point of privilege which I want to dispose of now. Assuming the minister's statement was not correct, it still does not present any question of privilege that I am able to see. There is no reflection upon any member of the house or on the house or its proceedings. It seems to me that what the hon. member is really trying to do is reopen the debate. Unless he has some further point I cannot see that this matter can be raised as a question of privilege.

Mr. Herridge: My point of privilege is this. The opinion which the minister gave to the house had a disastrous effect on the support given to my bill.