

Inquiries of the Ministry

to the Minister of Transport. Has the minister met with representatives of the C.B. of R.T., and has he anything to report as a result of that meeting?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of Transport): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I met with them just before coming into the house and we had a very frank exchange of views.

Mrs. Margaret Rideout (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question to the Minister of Transport. Could the minister inform the house of any developments that may have arisen as a result of discussions with the railways with respect to l.c.l. and express rates in the Atlantic provinces?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Information has come to us outside the house that the Minister of Transport is prepared to make a statement. If he has a statement to make he should make it on motions and not play politics while the parliamentary secretary makes statements in Moncton.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a difficult situation. I am sure if the minister wants to make a statement of a general nature that is akin to a statement of policy, then it should be made on motions.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: On the other hand the minister does not have to reply to the question.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Speaker, all I wish to do is to reply to a question that has been asked two or three times this week by members on the other side of the house. The statement is brief, and if Your Honour would permit me—

Mr. Speaker: Order. If hon. members agree to this I would allow other members of the opposition to ask the same question as the one asked by the parliamentary secretary. The minister could then answer the question. I think it might be easier to allow the minister to reply to a question which, as he himself pointed out, was previously asked by members on both sides of the house.

[Mr. Starr.]

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker, and as indicated before, it was quite clear that the minister was prepared to make a statement and was prepared to answer the question when he came into the house. Rather than do this the minister has played politics with people laid off by the C.N.R.

Mr. Speaker: For the moment we might pass on to another question.

FREIGHT RATESSTATEMENT ON REVIEW OF NEW
NON-CARLOAD RATES

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Michael Starr (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a question to the Minister of Transport. Will the minister now give the answer he promised the hon. member for Halifax on October 30 about the proposal re rate increases?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of Transport): Yes, Mr. Speaker; I think that is on the same subject. I am pleased to advise that I have been informed that the railway transport committee of the Canadian Transport Commission has received a letter today from the Canadian National Railways concerning this matter. This letter states the intention of both the C.N.R. and C.P.R. to make formal application to the commission to withdraw present class rates on less than carload shipments moving within the select territory covered by the Maritime Freight Rates Act and out of the Atlantic provinces west. The railways propose to substitute the present western rate for l.c.l. freight moving within the select territory and the "to maritimes" scale for shipments out of the Atlantic provinces, suitably amended to reflect reductions under the Maritime Freight Rates Act.

I want to assure the house that if the Canadian Transport Commission should approve this application the government will make the necessary funds available under the Maritime Freight Rates Act for the increased subsidy required. This, Mr. Speaker, is in accordance with the general undertaking the hon. member for Westmorland gave to her constituents when she met with them last week end.

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Albert): Referring to the first part of the minister's announcement which concerned the maritimes, will the minister, having learned his lesson, get cracking and bring about through