

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 13, 1958

The house met at 11.30 a.m.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

PROPOSED FUND TO HELP UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Prime Minister. Would the Prime Minister care to comment on a news report in this morning's edition of the *Globe and Mail* to the effect, and I now quote:

—that the Canadian ministers were cool to Macmillan's plan to create a one thousand million dollar fund for loans to help the economies of underdeveloped countries.

Mr. Speaker: I am not sure whether the Prime Minister feels that is something he would wish to deal with, but it seems to me to be a straight question of policy.

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

QUEBEC—LAY-OFFS IN SHOPS AT QUEBEC, CHARNY AND CHICOUTIMI

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Maurice Bourget (Levis): In the absence of the Minister of Transport, Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Acting Minister of Labour. Has the Minister of Labour or the Minister of Transport, now that he is back, received a telegram from the president of the Quebec and district labour council protesting against the lay-offs of employees working as machinists' helpers in the C.N.R. shops in Quebec, Charny and Chicoutimi? If so, has the minister taken any action to see that those employees are reinstated?

Hon. George H. Hees (Minister of Transport): I have not received such a telegram.

Mr. Bourget: I have a supplementary question. Owing to the fact that the minister has answered that he has not received this telegram, could I send him a copy and would he care to take action?

Mr. Hees: As I have pointed out on almost countless occasions, before any lay-offs are made by the management of the C.N.R. every possible investigation is made with regard to the possibilities of keeping the men employed. I will speak to the C.N.R. about this matter,

but I feel sure it has been treated in exactly the same way as have other matters that have been brought up in this house and about which I have spoken many times. I know that the Canadian National Railways management re-employs these men just as soon as there is any work to justify their re-employment. They feel just as badly as I do and as I am sure every hon. member of this house does when it is necessary to lay off any single employee of the Canadian National Railways.

Mr. Bourget: I would like to ask a supplementary question. In view of the numerous lay-offs which have occurred in the past few months, would the minister consider arranging a special meeting with the C.N.R. management to deal with this whole question of C.N.R. lay-offs?

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned some time ago in making an announcement in this house, the Canadian National Railways are employing an additional 5,000 men this summer. That is two or three times the number of people they will be laying off. The number of people re-employed or given summer employment will be several times the number it is necessary to lay off because jobs simply do not exist for them, and every priority will be given to those who are laid off with respect to this new employment program of the C.N.R. this summer.

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Laurier): May I ask a supplementary question of the minister. What action is being taken by the C.N.R. or by the minister with reference to the lay-offs to which my hon. friend has referred? During this week there have been two or three such lay-offs. Has any action been taken, or is any action being taken, by the C.N.R. or by the minister with reference to those lay-offs?

Mr. Hees: As I have told members of this house, and I will be glad to point this out again to the hon. member, before any lay-off is carried out every possible means of keeping the man employed is examined. He is laid off only when there is simply no work for him to do. As long as there is any possibility of employing him in his job he will be so employed. If there is any chance of his being employed on the additional work being provided through the summer maintenance program, for right of way maintenance