

*Oral Questions***HUMAN RIGHTS****U.S.S.R.—PLIGHT OF DR. OLGA MEDVEDKOVA**

Mr. Paul E. McRae (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. If we are to avoid a nuclear war it is extremely important that pressure be kept on both superpowers to reduce the tensions, which is precisely what the Prime Minister is very busy doing. There is a great deal of concern about a Dr. Olga Medvedkova who has been charged by the Soviet Government for pursuing peacekeeping matters, and who is a very close friend to groups in our country such as the Physicians for Social Responsibility.

Since it is so important that pressure be kept on both superpowers, is the Government in the process of taking some action to make representations to the Soviet Government to prevent Dr. Medvedkova from being put in prison, or from being sentenced?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have some information on this particular case. I understand that the person is not in prison but is under arrest. I will make further inquiries to see if some assistance can be rendered.

And the Progressive Conservative Members having returned to the Chamber:

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● (1500)

RAILWAYS**FUTURE OF MANITOBA SUBDIVISIONS**

Mr. Laverne Lewycky (Dauphin-Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome the late Tories, and to put my question to the Minister of Transport. As he knows, there have been some 18 hearings of the Canadian Transport Commission in Manitoba. All of the 18 hearings have been decided in favour of the railways. Can the Minister give me the assurance that he will review specifically the Winnipegosis and the Oakland subdivisions, with the idea of making sure those particular subdivisions are put into the permanent network until the year 2000, like some other subdivisions have been?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there are several appeals of CTC rulings on branch lines. I am now reviewing those decisions. I hope to be able to make decisions on each of those before the end of the new year. I would certainly be prepared to make sure the Hon. Member for Dauphin is one of the first ones to know what happens in Winnipegosis. I know it is a matter very close and dear to his heart.

PETITIONS**TABLING OF REPORTS OF CLERK OF PETITIONS**

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has laid upon the Table reports of the Clerk of Petitions stating that he has examined the petitions presented by Hon. Members on Monday, December 19, 1983 and finds that the petitions meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

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POINT OF ORDER**MR. NIELSEN—DEFEAT IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF CLAUSE OF BILL C-2**

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, as the Speaker indicated at two o'clock, the Chair intended to hear a point of order about which I notified the Chair at that time. This notice which I sent to Madam Speaker was received by one of Madam Speaker's aides at 1.57 p.m. today. The letter is dated December 20, 1983 and reads:

At 12.50 p.m. today while Bill C-2 was being considered in Committee of the Whole, the Government was defeated on Clause 6 of the said Bill with the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole after the count had been taken stating—

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It is difficult recognizing another Member on a point of order when the first Member is making a point of order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair will hear the President of the Privy Council immediately—

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A question of privilege? The President of the Privy Council.

[Translation]

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, I am raising a question of privilege, because the most sacred privilege we have in the House is freedom of expression, freedom of speech, and that is the only Member's privilege that can be the subject of a question of privilege, and I submit that on this side of the House, before the Hon. Member started arguing the issue, we were deprived of our right to speak, and that we had the privilege and the right to make our points in Committee of the Whole. In fact, when at one o'clock the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole adjourned the House, he clearly indicated that he wished to hear further representations before making a final decision, and now the rule *audi alteram partem* mentioned earlier by the Prime Minister must apply. In the circumstances, I submit that our privileges were affected by the fact that the Chair heard the Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) on