

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, it was not the statement of the special assistant that caught my attention. It was a statement in the *Toronto Sun* that a senior officer of the RCMP—

Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain): But you interfered.

Mr. Allmand: I did not interfere. Listen to the answer for a change.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Allmand: There was a statement in the *Toronto Sun* to the effect that a senior officer of the RCMP said that the Minister of Labour was under investigation. I found that a matter on which I should advise myself in case questions were asked in the House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Allmand: I did not direct the investigation. There is quite a difference between directing an investigation and asking the RCMP what they are doing for the purpose of giving answers in this House. If you do not know the difference, you are not very intelligent.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Allmand: In answer to the inquiry, the deputy commissioner in charge of criminal operations said he was surprised. He knew of no senior officer who said that the Minister of Labour was under investigation. He telephoned Toronto. He found that in Toronto there was an officer who had been interviewed by the *Toronto Sun*. The officer said he had told the interviewer no such thing as was printed in the *Toronto Sun*. I in no way interfered with the investigation. The RCMP are free to carry it out. However, from time to time I ask them questions in order to give answers in this House.

Mr. Andre: In his reply to the House, the Solicitor General indicated he had telephoned the deputy commissioner of the RCMP and asked for the name of the officer. Are officers of the RCMP to conclude that should interviews they might have with persons concerned with this investigation become public, they would be subject to personal attention and investigation by the Solicitor General?

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe I said I asked for the name of the officer in Toronto.

An hon. Member: Yes, you did.

Mr. Allmand: We will look at the blues and see what I said. If I did say that under fire, I was wrong. However, I do not think I said it. What I said was I approached the deputy commissioner of criminal operations and asked whether such a statement had been made. He said he did not know but that he would check with Toronto. He said an officer there did speak to the press. I did not ask the name. By the way, even though I did not ask, he told me the name but I forget it now.

Oral Questions

TRANSPORT

POSSIBLE ELIMINATION OF FREEZE ON FREIGHT RATES AND BRANCH LINE ABANDONMENT—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I will switch topics and direct my question to the very knowledgeable Minister of Transport. In view of the fact the freeze on freight rates and the moratorium on rail line abandonment will cease at the end of this year, is consideration being given to continuing that freeze and not going ahead with abandoning rail lines on the prairies?

● (1200)

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): First, I must confess I am insulted to be one of the very few members, if not the only member, in the House who did not receive contributions from the labour unions.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): I made an announcement on the freeze. It was an announcement following a cabinet meeting. This, I think, is going to end at the end of December. I do not think this will have the impact which is suggested. As far as branch lines are concerned, we thought we could reach a decision this week but it will take another week before we can make a statement.

Mr. Nystrom: I might say the minister probably did not receive any contributions from unions because he deserted them years ago.

In view of the fact that the hon. gentleman has often criticized the railroads in this country for controlling too much of the economy, why is he not extending the freeze on freight rates when the freeze should clearly be extended having regard to the lack of a transportation policy?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): I do not know whether the hon. member was here when this question was asked last week. The freeze covers only 22 per cent of the income of the railways. It does not cover, say, the transportation of coal or grain or a great many other products carried at agreed rates. It covers only certain categories of merchandise which do not affect the west at all. The impact on the cost of living will not be great. As I have said before, we intend to continue the review we began with western ministers hoping we can arrive at a better policy in the future. If ever we introduce some kind of freeze it will be more comprehensive and will have a better impact on the economy.

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TRADE

GOVERNMENT POSITION ON EXPORT OF ENRICHED URANIUM—SUGGESTED PUBLICATION OF COST OF RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN NEXT TEN YEARS

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce: In view of the fact that the export of uranium comes within federal responsibility and in view of the statement by the Minister of Energy,