

Inquiries of the Ministry

matter with his counterpart in Quebec as to its constitutionality and so on?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Solicitor General): No, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

Mr. Alexander: Is it the intention of the minister to discuss this matter with his counterpart in the province of Quebec?

[Translation]

Mr. Goyer: It could be discussed, once the Quebec Minister of Justice has indicated that he intends to take such a step.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**UNEMPLOYMENT—MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF UNIONS AND INDUSTRY TO FIND SOLUTION**

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Acting Prime Minister a question.

Since the government has been unable to control the increase in unemployment, could the Acting Prime Minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member cannot preface his question in this way, he must ask the question directly.

Mr. La Salle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to ask the Acting Prime Minister if in view of the present situation the government is willing to call a meeting of representatives of all sectors of the private industry and of labour leaders to try and find a solution to the unemployment problem?

[English]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): The government's policy, the encouragement which has been given to private industry to expand, the very large increase in government expenditure directed to the easing of unemployment, and the big drop in interest rates are indications of how effective these measures will be in promoting employment in the private sector.

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, would the Acting Prime Minister be so good as to outline at the first opportunity on motions what inducement the government has given private industry to expand, because private industry is not aware of any inducements having been offered?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I might point out to the hon. gentleman that the surveys we have regarding investment intentions indicate a very substantial increase in activity during the present year.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[Mr. Alexander.]

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS**TORONTO-WINNIPEG PASSENGER SERVICE REDUCTION—OPPORTUNITY FOR REPRESENTATIONS BY PUBLIC**

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport. In view of the statement he made on January 13 in answer to a question of mine concerning the dropping of trains Nos. 7 and 8 of Canadian National Railways and the minister's indication that a public hearing would be held before withdrawal of the trains, has the minister any information to convey to the House following his discussion with the Canadian Transport Commission in this regard?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I made an investigation following the hon. member's question. I was under the impression that it was abandonment of a service to which he referred, in which case a hearing would have been mandatory. I now understand that there is to be a reduction of service and therefore the railway is not obliged to go through the necessary hearing procedures. Subsequently, however, I was informed that the railway has undertaken to ensure that service is maintained at its prior level through some other arrangement involving the utilization of other trains.

Mr. Peters: Mr. Speaker, from the reply of the minister I think he did understand the original question because he said that there would be no train withdrawals without a public hearing and indicated that the two trains were being withdrawn. As the minister who is empowered by the Act to intervene in such matters, is he willing, on behalf of people in northern Ontario scattered across an area of several hundred miles, to exercise his ministerial prerogative in this regard?

Mr. Jamieson: Yes, Mr. Speaker, to the extent that I have the authority. I do agree that perhaps I did unwittingly mislead the hon. member when I spoke of train withdrawal. Under the Act a train can be withdrawn as long as service is maintained on that route. It is the total abandonment of a service or route that requires a public hearing. I will take a look at this matter and see whether there is any means through which I can intervene, and if I can help I shall be glad to do so.

[Later:]

Mr. Gaétan-J. Serré (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Transport. In view of the fact that some centres in northern Ontario will be completely without passenger service, would the minister consider setting up a public hearing at these centres?

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, I think that is virtually the same form of question as that asked by the hon. member for Timiskaming earlier. If there is a total abandonment of service as the hon. member indicated, then it is my understanding that a hearing is required. If in fact an area is going to be without service in the way that he suggested, then, of course, the commission may possibly