

Mr. Starr: My question to the Prime Minister was the following. Has the Prime Minister complete confidence in the management of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal more confidence in it than some hon. gentlemen opposite.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Starr: May I ask a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Without ruling on whether the question is in order I have some doubts about it because it seems to be very general in scope. I believe an answer to the question would be more appropriate by way of a statement on motions. The hon. member might want to ask a related question rather than a supplementary one.

Mr. Starr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will ask the Prime Minister whether he will give to this house a full, frank and clear statement dealing with the charges of mismanagement in the C.B.C. as voiced by the Secretary of State; and will he explain to this house and to the people what has been done to deal with this situation in an organization spending this year \$140 million of public money?

Mr. Pearson: If I were to answer that question on orders of the day I would probably take up the 40 minute period allowed.

Mr. Starr: Will the Prime Minister say whether he will make this concise and clear statement?

Mr. Pearson: I hope to do that, Mr. Speaker, at an appropriate occasion.

Mr. Starr: I can only assume from these evasive answers that the Prime Minister has no intention of doing so.

LABOUR CONDITIONS

STUDY OF REASONS FOR LAY-OFFS OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Labour may I direct a question to the right hon. Prime Minister with reference to the widespread lay-offs of railway employees and the fact that the decline in the number of employees on the railroads over the years seems to be much greater than any decline in the volume of freight handled, which would indicate that technological factors are

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involved. In view of this does the government intend to introduce legislation in the near future to implement the recommendations of the Freedman report?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this is a very important question dealing with the legislative intentions of the government and I cannot answer it on orders of the day, except to inform my hon. friend that we are aware of the seriousness of this immediate problem. We are also aware of the importance of dealing with some of the legislation which is already on the order paper.

Mr. Douglas: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. May I ask the Prime Minister, then, if the government is making any study to ascertain the extent to which these lay-offs are due to a decline in the volume of freight handled and, on the other hand, the extent to which they are due to technological changes and the modernization of railway equipment?

Mr. Pearson: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are very seriously concerned with this matter in all its aspects, and are examining it.

Mr. Douglas: I have another supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the Prime Minister tell us what are the results of this investigation?

Mr. Pearson: I will be glad to announce them in due course.

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Albert): I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister or the Minister of Transport with reference to these railway lay-offs. When will the proposed announcement be made with regard to the matter of freight rates, which the minister admitted is at the root of the lay-off problem?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of Transport): I am not sure that I understood the latter part of my hon. friend's question, and I am not sure of the correctness of his earlier suggestion that I had indicated that the reduction in traffic was due to the increased freight rates. What I did indicate to the house the other day was that the reduction was due to reduced traffic. This problem is national in scope, particularly with respect to the volume of loading of bulk commodities.

In so far as the statement that I have indicated I hope to make to the house is concerned, I cannot say for sure when it will