

*Oral Questions***VIA RAIL**

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR WORK

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. The Minister will be aware of the concern of railway shop crafts regarding the present and future of VIA repair work. At one point it seemed that there was an option that VIA would contract repair work to Bombardier. Could the Minister of Transport confirm that that is no longer an option and that railway workers, who are concerned about the present and future of VIA repair and maintenance, can be assured that they will continue to do that work by an arrangement between CN and VIA?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think I can give the Hon. Member that assurance. The option of contracting service work to Bombardier was considered by the Rail Passenger Action Force and, indeed, the management of VIA Rail. But I believe it is fair to say that that option has now been dropped. It is clear that VIA Rail will want to take over a greater percentage of the maintenance work on its own. Clearly, Transcona is situated in an area, strategically and geographically, where the bulk of CN traffic is generated. As a matter of fact, 70 per cent of the tonnage which is shipped on CN occurs west of the Lakehead, so I think that Transcona has a promising and secure future. I share the concern of my hon. friend, but I can assure him that all steps will be taken to ensure that it remains a key maintenance facility in the CN network.

● (1500)

WINNIPEG REPAIR SHOP PROPOSAL

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): On the same topic, Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the Minister could also indicate to the House whether it is his view that the building of the new VIA Rail repair shop, which at one point was scheduled to be built in Winnipeg, has not been completely foreclosed? Does it still remain a possibility down the road, if not immediately, that Winnipeg being the logical place for such a facility will eventually be recognized?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I believe I can assure the Hon. Member as far as the future of VIA Rail maintenance facilities is concerned. It is fair to say that the project originally scheduled has been deferred. That does not mean that it is cancelled for all time. I think the most promising and encouraging fact is that this Government is taking positive steps to expand the services of VIA Rail across Canada and to restore a number of the services which were cancelled by the previous Government. That should be the most encouraging signal which has happened to date.

CLERK OF PETITIONS' REPORTRELOCATION OF NATIONAL DEFENCE DEPARTMENT
EMPLOYEES IN OTTAWA-CARLETON

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the petition presented by the Hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Daubney) on Monday, March 11, 1985, meets the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

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PRIVILEGE

Mr. Speaker: I have received notice of two questions of privilege. I intend to take them in the order I received them. The Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East had a question of privilege. I understand that now the Hon. Member withdraws his question of privilege. The second question of privilege is from the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Miss Copps).

ALLEGED THREATENING REMARK OF MR. McLEAN

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): I am rising on a question of privilege arising from the attempt by the Secretary of State (Mr. McLean) to punish me for, or intimidate me from, the exercise of freedom of speech in Parliament, thereby committing what I believe to be a breach of the privileges of this House.

In today's *Ottawa Citizen*—an original of which I have here for your examination, Mr. Speaker—in responding to a question about the decision not to reappoint my mother to her position as citizenship judge, the Secretary of State replied, "You check the record. What her daughter's had to say about the Government". In other words, the Government has decided to punish me for my criticism of it in Parliament and has given this as a reason for me to avoid the same mistake in the future.

This is clear intimidation of the House, not just of one Hon. Member, but of any Hon. Member whose relatives may have dealings with this Government, in other words, every Hon. Member.

Citation 71 of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition is very clear, and I quote:

Direct threats which attempt to influence a Member's actions in the House are undoubtedly breaches of privileges.

The Minister clearly stated his threat in a direct quotation. I believe his threat affected not only my privileges but those of the House as defined in Redlich and Ilbert's *Procedure of the House of Commons*, Vol. 1, page 46, which reads:

The sum of the fundamental rights of the House and of its individual Members as against the prerogatives of the Crown, the authority of the ordinary courts of law and the special rights of the House of Lords.

I believe I have established a prima facie case of breach of privilege that the matter has threatened my free speech and that of all Hon. Members, and I await the Speaker's ruling. If