

● (1450)

An hon. Member: What is the question?

An hon. Member: This is a speech.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I do not understand this noise today. Apparently, some of these hon. members believe that if a gaggle of geese saved Rome they are going to save the government by these unseemly interruptions!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Can the minister give that assurance? Mr. Speaker, I can give information but not intelligence to hon. members such as the hon. member—

An hon. Member: Especially the hon. member for St. Boniface.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): A question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Fairweather: The fish are biting.

An hon. Member: How did you know he meant you, Joe?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I was not able to discern from the remarks of the right hon. gentleman to which hon. member he was referring.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for St. Boniface, on a question of privilege.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege is that I want to abide by the rules of this House.

An hon. Member: Then sit down.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): I also recognize that I have to get up because I know that parliamentary secretaries cannot ask questions, and I also know that anyone asking questions should ask them and not make a speech. I object to the brief—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member, of course, does not raise a question of privilege. He does point out, however, that questions ought to be brief. I would appreciate it if the right hon. gentleman would put his question.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, questions have to be brief, but they have to be understandable to a government that does not want to understand.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: As far as the hon. member for St. Boniface is concerned, I ascribe none of that lack of intellect to him.

Oral Questions

An hon. Member: Ask the question.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I ask the minister now, following the protection that has been built around him, if he will advise that this appeal when taken will not find the government of Canada, again through its counsel, supporting the CPR rather than the rights of the consumers of Canada?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): We have heard a statement from a master of misinformation, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Is that Joe Guay?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman has taxed the patience of this House to describe, in a totally inaccurate and totally misleading way, a position which the Attorney General has taken. In this case, the position has been to try before the Canadian Transport Commission and before the courts to indicate a particular view of the law which it was seen to be our duty to do.

Mr. Diefenbaker: What is your duty? To tramp on the rights of the consumers?

Mr. Lang: We have so far maintained and followed the kind of line which it seemed to us was important to put before the court and the Canadian Transport Commission, and has resulted in the decision which at this moment has led to the lowering of freight rates to half the level they would otherwise have been increased. While these matters are still before the courts, we ought not to go much further into debate than we have. I think it is important to say to the right hon. gentleman that he is completely wrong in suggesting that we at any time sided with the railways. That is a false statement and he ought to have known it was false.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I have not had an answer to the question. I asked the minister if he was going to follow the same course that was wrong and was unjustified of rooking the consumers of Canada. The CPR had their lawyers. Did he not think they were good enough without the assistance of the Department of Justice?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman devises an attack by asking the government whether we are going to do something we have never done and he expects an answer. I think he should have more respect for the House in view of his record in it.

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INDUSTRY

PROPOSED EXTENSION OF SHIPBUILDING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. The shipbuilding export assistance program ends March 31 and any sales worked out and