

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

**Mr. Reynold Rapp (Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. The Acting Prime Minister said my constituency was Humboldt-Melville-Tisdale, instead of Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale. Nevertheless I very much appreciate the Acting Prime Minister's congratulations and thank him for the nice remarks he made on my appointment.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**FREIGHT RATES**

## NOTICE OF INCREASE FILED BY RAILWAY ASSOCIATION

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of Transport. Is he aware that the Railway Association of Canada, representing some 15 railroads in this country, have filed notice that they intend to increase some class and commodity rates? If the minister is aware of this, I wonder if he could advise the house whether the new railway commission has been set up with all the regulations and administration powers necessary to administer the new transportation policy in Canada, or is this an attempt by the Railway Association to raise these rates under the old act?

**Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the application; like the hon. gentleman, I received it in the mail. Part V of the Transportation Act, which contains the amendments to the Railway Act, was proclaimed on March 23 and is now part of the law of Canada.

**Mr. Olson:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I know the act was proclaimed and is part of the law. What I asked the minister was whether the new transportation commission, along with the necessary regulations, has been set up to deal with this kind of thing in the event that any of these rates exceed the maximum allowable under the new act.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Mr. Speaker, all amendments to the Railway Act—here I speak subject to correction in detail—were proclaimed on March 23. Among the other provisions in the act is a provision that until the new transport commission is set up the board of transport commissioners will act in its place. That is the law as passed by parliament and given royal assent at this session.

**Mr. Olson:** A further supplementary question. Can the minister tell the house whether the new transport commission is now set up?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The answer, sir, is no.

[Mr. MacEachen.]

**TRANSPORTATION**

## INQUIRY AS TO REPORT ON MARITIME STUDY

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Halifax):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. In light of the drastic loss of winter traffic to Halifax, I wonder if the minister can now advise the maritimes, including his own province, whether the special maritime transportation study is now receiving consideration by the department.

**Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is referring to the report of the consultants who were engaged jointly by the Atlantic Development Board and my department, their report is rapidly approaching completion and I hope will be in my hands shortly.

**Mr. Forrestall:** A supplementary question. Could the minister now advise us whether this is a matter which will come before the house prior to our summer adjournment?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Mr. Speaker, I would hate to predict the course of this parliament for even one day.

**Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Albert):** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the transportation aspect of the secret plans to keep open the St. Lawrence up to Montreal, will the minister stop all activity by engineers of his department until we have had the chance to examine this whole question in a committee of the house, as promised before the Easter recess?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Mr. Speaker, I would reassure the hon. gentleman that there are no secret plans whatever; therefore there is no need to suppress the secret plans.

**Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert):** Will the minister give every assurance that no engineers in his department or any other branch of the government are working on any plans to keep open the St. Lawrence in the winter to Montreal?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Mr. Speaker, I think in the very careful and calculated language of the hon. gentleman I could give that assurance. But I would not want to mislead the house, sir; therefore I might be permitted to add this word. As is well known—there is no secret about this—consideration is being given to improving the ship channel in the St. Lawrence for normal summer navigation.