

Provision of Moneys to CNR and Air Canada

or that fellow was a buccaneer in the way he promoted his railway. We are not that breed of cat at all. We are an entirely different breed, and to carry fictions into the present generation with regard to the financing of a very major part of our transportation system to me just does not make sense, and I hope it does not make sense to most hon. members around me.

I do not wish to engage in philosophic rhetoric. I want to make one specific point in support of the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Timiskaming. I think that the case has been proven that we should not carry on the practices of the past in using the sort of bookkeeping approach to the affairs of Canadian National Railways.

What concerns me more than anything else is that in Atlantic Canada—and in my part of Atlantic Canada, the Halifax area—the railway has put a large number of people out of work. People with 20 or 25 years experience have suddenly been thrown out of a job. For this reason I think that the sooner we put the affairs of Canadian National on a proper footing, forget what happened in the past, and try not to carry on ancient debts when nobody remembers how they arose, the better off we will be in recognizing what is realism. I believe this, because I do not think anybody in the House can say that if we carried on this bookkeeping exercise for the next 100 years the financial situation would eventually right itself.

To me that is the test. Will it ever work? Why do we engage in fable or myth? I say we cannot afford to do that, because it is just not going to work out. There is no way on earth you can take an amount of money that is passed on from a previous generation and say that eventually it will be paid off, because it will not. Then, why do we carry on with the myth? Why do we perpetuate this way of trying to deal with the railway situation in Canada? To me it is clear that we cannot do it. Then why should we try to do it?

Are we shoving off onto the next generation of MP's something that you and I cannot shoulder ourselves? Surely we are, because past generations of MP's have done the same to us, and previous generations of MP's did it to them, although those previous generations may have thought it would work. But the further we get away from the idea of previous generations, the more we must face the fact that what we are dealing with is a sham and a farce. This is why the point made by

[Mr. McCleave.]

the hon. member for Timiskaming is so valid. Now is the time to turn abruptly around, to take stock and say that this situation should no longer prevail.

Mr. Speaker, I was not really concerned with that philosophical argument. I am probably more of a pragmatist than a philosopher, and like the hon. member I am more concerned with people's right to work, whether they have a job, whether they can get up in the morning and go to work or whether they have to sit around home and fuss and fret because they do not have work.

The point I am trying to make is that if we remove this ancient debt structure from the shoulders of Canadian National Railways, maybe they will be able to come before us and give a truer accounting of themselves. They would not be inhibited by some grandiose debt structure which they inherited from God-knows when; they would be able to say, "We can do such and such and so and so." They would be able to think in terms of progress, of improving their service and improving the conditions under which their employees work. What I am saying is, remove the fiction from the present system and give them that opportunity.

• (9:50 p.m.)

I have been very impressed that in the battle for retaining passenger service, Canadian National Railways report four or five times the amount of passengers carried that Canadian Pacific Railway report, and about one-third the loss that Canadian Pacific Railway alleges it has suffered. I think the CNR is inclined in the right direction and I should like to see it unencumbered by this fiction of the past. I make this plea very fervently because I can foresee that in the year 2000 Parliament will have to face the same situation that we face tonight, and I think that is foolish.

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I am rather deafened by the prolonged applause. If I were sitting in a certain other seat, the applause might even last until ten o'clock. However, I believe I have little to hope for in that direction. I was very impressed by the speech we just heard from the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave). I, too, should like to add my sweet tenor voice to the chorus of those—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Rose: —who are supporting a six-months hoist of Bill C-7. It has been said,