

snow removal at the Quebec City airport were as follows: \$265,696, \$288,880, \$292,129 and \$305,623. Although there was a difference of \$40,000 between the lowest and the highest bids the authorities of the Montreal regional agency, which were apparently responsible for this contract, managed to grant the contract to the highest bidder. And among the people interested in this contract, there was a contractor from Sainte-Foy in the riding of Louis-Hébert. At that time, this contractor tried to draw his member's attention to what was going on. He also got in touch with the secretary of the Minister of Transport in Quebec City. Personally, I made several phone calls to the office of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand), in Parliament because I thought he was one of those who could help us. I supplied him with the figures I just mentioned. But apparently he could do nothing. As the minister stated in the House and elsewhere, he has lost control. Is it true or not? In any event, we know that to make profits certain things should be done and others avoided.

We all know that if an honest business calls for tenders, it is in the intention of making a sensible choice to its advantage. It is as simple as that and to date nobody has proved to me that paying the highest price was the most economical principle.

And contrary to our NDP friends, who say that the government should nationalize the CPR, I would rather be in favour of merging the CNR and the CPR. Most of the companies doing business in this country and which are successful in business have often merged. Obviously, some positions in the Canadian National management, starting with that of the president, would disappear. However, in my mind, the benefits drawn from an equitable management of the Canadian Pacific will perhaps lead us to consider the implementation of this practice for other Crown agencies.

Since such a merger policy cannot be realized in one day, Mr. Speaker, we may perhaps attempt some other method, which is that the top management of the Canadian National, including the president, be paid a commission.

Because set salaries are the reason for a stupid and losing administration, I think it would be appropriate to implement our suggestions, as members of parliament, so that government succeeds in instilling awareness and motivation in some management officials and in giving them the guts to do a good job in their companies. I believe this country is prosperous enough to support these transport corporations. In my opinion, if stricter measures were applied, the Crown transportation companies could make their services more profitable and efficient and Parliament would be spared the voting of funds which, until this day, we can only compare to welfare payments. I think the situation is most abnormal in a country that prides itself on being rich, prosperous and well administered. Mr. Speaker, to prove ourselves and show that the country is prosperous, that the administration is honest, we will have to go into action without any delay.

[English]

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, as hon. members know, this bill has been around for quite some time, almost a year. It is not my intention to unduly

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delay the progress of it, but I think this situation clearly illustrates the haphazard manner in which the government is managing the affairs of this country. This bill is a bit of a joke because the money provided by it has already been spent. Therefore, it is redundant.

Perhaps we might consider some of the reasons the bill has been around so long. One reason is it has had very low priority on the government's legislative timetable. It has been nothing more than filler legislation. As I said before, the money has already been spent. Members on both sides in committee and in the House expressed reservation about this particular exercise.

The second reason the bill has been around so long is that, for the first time members of the House and the committee have scrutinized this particular piece of legislation. I am not sure whether it is the first time in history, but for the first time since I have been a member of this House, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) appeared before the committee to explain the bill. That was very useful. It gave members a better understanding of the financial structure of these two Crown corporations.

Throughout the committee hearings, it was obvious that a number of the committee members were not satisfied with the financial arrangements that exist for these two major Crown corporations. I believe the Minister of Finance alluded to the fact he would like to see some changes made in the overall financial structure of these two corporations. This suggestion has also been made by previous Ministers of Transport. It is a position which meets with general agreement among the committee members who took part in the debate in the House as well as the extensive committee proceedings that were carried out.

A good number of the committee members were not satisfied with the answers they received from the officials of these two Crown corporations. They were not satisfied with the explanations nor with the fact that on many occasions the officials of these two major corporations refused to give information which committee members were attempting to elicit. The committee members were also concerned about the fact that these two Crown corporations were not utilizing their resources in the proper fashion and discharging the mandate given to them, namely to provide safe, efficient and effective transportation service by air and rail.

We found that these two corporations were engaged in many exotic, collateral ventures which really have no relationship to the matter of transportation services in this country. For this reason, the amendments were proposed at the report stage. We wanted to focus attention on the fact that these two major Crown corporations are not totally discharging the mandate given to them by the people of Canada.

Another major concern of the committee members is the feeling that parliament has no control over these corporations. This feeling came about because in many instances the officials refused to give the kind of information that was being solicited. It was the general feeling throughout the hearings that parliament has no effective control over these corporations.