

Supply

Let me turn from the litany of losses to something else. Today I raised a question concerning job creation on the railways. I directed it to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) and it was answered by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin). I am glad the Minister of Transport is here because I simply do not understand the kind of answers I received from him when I asked him the question. Apparently the situation amounts to a shell game by the Government which has allotted, as a cornerstone of its employment policies over the next year, some \$400 million for the upgrading of the railways, to stimulate some employment. I do not know whether the Minister is using the figure of \$25,000 per job or whatever. All I know is that it will supposedly produce about one-tenth of the employment we need. However, since the total rail program will supposedly run until 1991 and create 400,000 jobs and he will put in \$400 million this year alone, to begin with, and I do not know how many more millions of dollars will be required, I asked the Minister whether he could guarantee that there would be no employment cuts to the railways. The railways have been losing 5,500 jobs a year on an average since 1976. He could not guarantee me that. What concerns me is that all we will do will be to pump more money into the railways for the purposes of upgrading and creating employment, yet we will continue to lose employment. I find that hard to understand. I frankly find that to be very confusing because the projections for investment in the railways over the next year have been exactly what they have been over the last two years, that is, \$1.3 billion. We are losing employment on the railways at the rate of 5,000 or more jobs each year on the average, since 1976. If the railways do not increase their investment in their own rolling stock, upgrading, track enhancement and improvement, then it will be up to the Government. If the Government is to put in money just to let the railways off the hook, my Party and I think we should have equity. The Minister gets up. Yes, I am suggesting that perhaps we should even nationalize the CNR—

Mr. Pepin: Good!

Mr. Rose: —because the Minister says that it is a commercial venture and is not part of social welfare. I have the facts right here in my hand. However, if he looks at the charter of the CNR, and it decided to bail out a couple of bankrupt railway companies when it was first established, its objective is for enhancement and improvement—and I have forgotten the precise word, but in other words its objective is to assist and enhance Canada. I do not have the right quote in my hand at the moment. I have lost it in this pile of papers, but if I find it, I will read it.

Mr. Pepin: It must have something to do with transportation.

Mr. Rose: If it is not to the benefit of Canada, then why do we have a national railway? Why do we have a railway as a Crown corporation?

Mr. Pepin: For transportation purposes.

Mr. Rose: However, if it is just another business with no social purpose other than that, then I do not see much point in having it as a Crown corporation. We might as well sell it off.

Mr. Heap: That is what the Government will do.

Mr. Rose: Well, no, they did not want it in the first place.

Mr. Heap: When it starts making money.

Mr. Rose: Oh, I see. Bandeden has said it will be sold. Where is Bandeden now? He has gone on to some insurance company. Anyway, I object to that. We will pump more money into the railways, they will take that money and they will not create jobs. If they do not create jobs, how can that be a core of a job creating program? On Wednesday the Minister of Finance said that \$400 million would be pumped into the railways for job creation—that is a third of the \$1.2 billion he plans to use. The Minister is shaking his head.

Mr. Pepin: Four hundred million is in addition to the \$3.2 billion over the next four years for the modernization of western rail transportation.

Mr. Rose: The bottom line is, will it be job-creative or not? If the railways continue to cut their work force, how on earth will that create jobs? The Minister is shaking his head. It is too difficult, too complex for this Member to understand. Therefore, I must be wrong. The money is to be used for tracks and will employ the steel plants, but in the meantime the railways will be nationalized and improved in such a way that they will not need as many people. That is probably what he is suggesting.

The problem with our economic policies and employment strategies is that, first, they have been short-term and, second, they have been wrongheaded. We have been spending all kinds of money to push megaprojects, such as drilling in the Beaufort Sea. What about providing a few small social welfare bits for Dome Petroleum? That ought to be a good idea, and perhaps a few more, if they really need it. Ignore the guy who will lose his home. Consider Hibernia and the oilsands. The Government will steal from alternative energy sources, from conservation, from the CHIP program and give it to what? Nukes? Will it give money toward stockpiling more heavy water down in Canso or Cape Breton, where there are two plants and \$800 million was written off last year? So we have all kinds of money for certain things and not for others. The Nova Scotia Federation of Labour says, "Do it now. Let us start some upgrading and expansion". However, we do not get that. We are asked to pull together. We are asked to do some vague thing called pulling together. We are experiencing business bankruptcies, people are out of work, taxes are rising, but what have we done? The Prime Minister says, "Pull together. We must have unity and co-operation". Who's fault is it? Who has been in the Government for these past 14 years? One cannot blame it all on the municipalities or on world conditions. Hon. Members opposite must bear some of the blame. Today the Prime Minister had the crushing gall to say that he will appoint a former Minister of Finance to tell us