

Transportation Policy

that has exactly the same status as the Maritime Freight Rates Act and the Crowsnest pass agreement.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, can the minister assure the House that he has finally agreed with the contention that he should have a more active policy role in national transportation policy? While his proposals are being transformed into legislation, will he make greater use of the powers he has already, particularly under section 50 of the National Transportation Act and section 100 of the Railway Act, to exercise more authority over his ministry?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): It is a very general question, Mr. Speaker, and it would be easy to agree if I knew exactly what the hon. member has in mind.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I would refer the minister to the proceedings of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications for December 21. That will show exactly what I have in mind. There was a discussion with the chairman of the CTC. I want to ask one more question in the context of the latest transportation initiative of the minister. Has thought been given to creating a more independent agency for the supply of ferry service to the island provinces, so that in times of labour strife when, for example, the CN service is disrupted, there would not be an added burden on those provinces?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If I understood the minister earlier, questions of this sort asking for details ought to go before the committee. I do not want to interfere, however, if the minister wishes to answer.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, this is something we are looking into. We hope we will have some result from the negotiations carried on between CN and the brotherhood. We do not have any final results yet.

● (1720)

Mr. O'Sullivan: Mr. Speaker, like all other members representing densely populated areas, I listened with interest to the minister describing how he hopes to improve transportation services. May I ask, since this is not touched on in the report, what are the minister's plans for regional airports? This question interests those representing centres of moderately large population such as Hamilton, Windsor, London and so on—centres which are on the periphery of large cities with international airports. What are the minister's plans for such regional airports?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, discussions are continuing with regard to Hamilton airport. Quite possibly, discussions concerning London airport have finished. I will inquire. Discussions are continuing with regard to Windsor airport. I think that I can answer more adequately tomorrow.

Mr. O'Sullivan: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister envision that STOL aircraft or certain types of medium-sized jets will use regional airports in this country? Is the minister, together with his officials, devising a policy under which environmental impact studies will be carried out before existing regional airports are expanded or new airports built?

[Mr. Marchand (Langelier).]

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, this will be future policy. No doubt we are going to do that. Five or six days ago I met with regional carriers. We will have to elaborate a policy for third level carriers. Regional carriers want to know exactly where they stand in relation to national carriers and third level groups. This policy has not yet been defined.

Mr. Alkenbrack: Mr. Speaker, I wish to make some remarks about a subject I first raised in 1970 in this House, and then ask a question. The subject concerns passenger service between Toronto and Ottawa. I wish to include in my remarks passenger service from Windsor eastward to Ottawa, a service which I understand the minister wants to improve. If he does improve the service, I will congratulate him, because if anything needs improving it is rail passenger service in this country. In the past, the CNR provided rail passenger service—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member, in opening his remarks, said he would make a few remarks and then ask a question. As the present period has been set aside for the purpose of allowing hon. members to ask questions, perhaps the hon. member would be good enough to ask his question.

Mr. Alkenbrack: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I ask, why run the CNR passenger service from Toronto to Ottawa through Brockville? Why pay the CPR rent for use of its track between Brockville and Ottawa when the shortest, most economical route between Toronto and Ottawa is from Toronto to Napanee, then eastward from Napanee by way of the Smiths Falls subdivision to Ottawa? I hope that under the new policy the CNR will use the Smiths Falls subdivision and thus provide an economical and profitable passenger service. It should use the subdivision in providing service from points west in Ontario, like Windsor and Toronto, to Ottawa.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, as I was not minister of transport in 1970 when the hon. member raised his question originally, I did not research the point. I will do it and try to give the hon. member an answer. The subject is technical.

[Translation]

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): My question, Mr. Speaker, concerns an intermodal system including land, sea, highways and ferries. I should like to ask the minister whether the global policy he has just set forth could include the reopening of discussion on subsidies to the ferries that link Vancouver with the mainland, that is those which shuttle back and forth between Nanaimo and the Horseshoe Bay, a link in the transcontinental chain which the Trans-Canada highway represents?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Everything, of course, can be included in a general policy. Still, I would rather discuss the matter of ferries separately because their problem is very special. In the case of the Maritime provinces, at least in the case of two of them, namely Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, I believe, that was one of the conditions of their entry into Confederation; so the situation is not quite the same. It was true of the railroad in the case of British Columbia, but not so with regard to the