

THE ROYAL ASSENT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received which is as follows:

Government House, Ottawa
April 5, 1973

Sir:

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Gérard Fautaux, P.C., Chief Justice of Canada, in his capacity as Deputy Governor General, will proceed to the Senate chamber today, the 5th day of April, at 5.45 p.m., for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to certain bills.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
Roger de C. Nantel
for
Esmond Butler,
Secretary
to the Governor General

• (1700)

[English]

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Pursuant to Standing Order 40, it is my duty to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. McKenzie)—Post Office—New postal code; the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Rowland)—National Defence—Renewal of Norad Agreement; the hon. member for South Western Nova (Mr. Haliburton)—Fisheries—Lobster fishery.

[Translation]

It being five o'clock p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business, as listed on today's Order Paper, namely private bills, notices of motions (papers), public bills.

[English]

There being no item under the heading "Bills" on the order paper, the House will now proceed to Notices of Motions (Papers).

Great Slave Lake Railway

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

TRANSPORT

REQUEST FOR REPORT OF MR. JUSTICE TRITSCHLER ON CONSTRUCTION OF GREAT SLAVE LAKE RAILWAY

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre) moved:

That an Order of the House do issue for a copy of the report of Mr. Justice Tritschler on the inquiry into the construction of the Great Slave Lake Railway.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this motion for the production of the report of Mr. Justice Tritschler into the construction of the Great Slave Lake Railway is on the order paper because it is my opinion, the opinion of members from all parties in the House, the opinion of some eminent legal counsel, and the opinion of the contractors themselves that they still have cause for some significant redress as a result of losses incurred in the construction of this railway on behalf of the Canadian National Railways. After seven years or more of efforts of all kinds to obtain redress, these contractors have not yet given up. The standing committee of this House on Transport and Communications, after a great deal of effort by members of all parties, were finally able a couple of years ago to get the government to agree to refer this subject to the committee. We had hearings, heard the contractors, heard the railway representatives and submitted a report to this House which the House subsequently adopted. I quote from that report as follows:

During the hearings your committee was confronted with conflicting evidence relating to the problems caused by unexpected weather, difficult terrain, and the use of clauses 16 and 18 in the Canadian National Railways' construction contract. Considering this conflicting evidence and the technical problems relating to it your committee recommends the following:

I will read the one pertinent recommendation, which is:

That the Minister of Transport establish a one-man inquiry to consider the merits of the claims submitted to this committee by the Great Slave Lake Railway contractors. The person nominated to conduct the inquiry should be acceptable to both the contractors and the Canadian National Railways and should report to the minister in confidence so as not to prejudice any future court hearing.

After many more months of delay, the minister finally appointed Mr. Justice Tritschler who submitted his report to the minister. As a result of that report the minister advised the contractors concerned, without telling them what was in the report, that their demand for redress would not be recognized. Mr. Speaker, the minister and the government say that because the report was submitted to the minister in confidence they cannot make it available to the House and, more particularly, to the contractors concerned. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that the reason for confidentiality no longer exists for the following overriding reasons. I repeat the statement in the report:

The person nominated to conduct the inquiry should be acceptable to both the contractors and the Canadian National Railways—

At no time, Mr. Speaker, did the minister or any of his officials communicate in any way with the Lucas Construction Company or Mr. John Lucas of Regina to ascertain whether the appointment of Mr. Justice Tritschler was acceptable. My information is that the minister or no