

Railways

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, in conclusion I wish to quote one of Britain's great prime ministers, Sir Winston Churchill, who stated:

The destiny of mankind is not decided by material computation. When great causes are on the move in the world . . . we learn that we are spirits, not animals, and that something is going on in space and time, and beyond space and time, which, whether we like it or not, spells duty.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that, prior to the Quebec referendum, and shortly thereafter, members of this House, and indeed many of the first ministers, made a commitment not only to the people of Quebec but indeed to all Canadians with regard to constitutional renewal. We, as Members of Parliament, ought to seize this historic opportunity to fulfil our duty to the Canadian people. Mr. Speaker, I suggest the time is now.

● (1700)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for York-Peel (Mr. Stevens)—Government Expenditures—Query respecting increases; the hon. member for Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly)—Hazardous Substances—Urea formaldehyde foam insulation—Notification of potential health hazard.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

[English]

Items Nos. 17, 18, 22 and 25 allowed to stand by unanimous consent.

RAILWAY ACT

AMENDMENT RESPECTING CONSTRUCTION OF CHAIN-LINK
FENCES

Mr. D. M. Collette (York East) moved that Bill C-227, to amend the Railway Act (fences), be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Transport.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I enter private members' hour with a bill of my own which I have discussed with the critics of the other parties, the hon. member

for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) who in his brief tenure as minister of transport did a first rate job for the country and with whom I have shared many causes in the Thirtieth Parliament on the standing committee on transport and communications, and the official critic of the New Democratic Party, the hon. member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) who is present today and I think will be participating in the debate. I know I have his approval for this bill. The Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) informed me that he is quite prepared to allow this bill to go forward to the Standing Committee on Transport. This will mark the first time that a private member's bill has gone forward in this Parliament.

It is very rare for private members' bills to go to committee, but in this case I feel very much vindicated because I have worked on this particular matter since 1977. It came about in rather tragic circumstances, as a result of the death of one of my very young constituents, a girl named Sandra Jensen, who in 1977 was hit by a Canadian Pacific freight train in my constituency of York East.

My constituency is one of those in metropolitan Toronto which straddles the Don Valley system. We have the main lines of both the Canadian Pacific Railway and Canadian National Railways. There have been many injuries over the past, but the death of young Sandra Jensen was particularly tragic. As a result of representations from people in my constituency—obviously her parents and members of the council of the then borough of North York, which is now the city of North York—I brought forward this bill in November, 1977. This is the first time this bill, through the lottery or draw system in the House of Commons, has come up for debate.

I do not think I should bore the House, but I had many a battle over this bill with the former minister of transport, the Hon. Otto Lang, and the president of the Canadian Transport Commission, the Hon. Edgar Benson. We tried to come to some agreement; it was on again, off again. I must pay tribute to the present Minister of Transport who has seen fit to allow this bill to go to committee. As I understand it, there will be support on all sides to permit that today.

Basically it is a very simple bill. It is to require that chain-link fencing be constructed along railway rights-of-way in urban areas upon the petition of a municipality to the Canadian Transport Commission. The current Railway Act provides only for fencing in rural areas basically designed to keep cows off railway tracks. Of course, we do not have many cows in metropolitan Toronto, but there are many railway lines. As I said, the main lines of both major railways go through my constituency. There is a lot of trespassing on those railway rights-of-way. Older people can take care of themselves; they run the risk of being on the tracks. But this bill seeks to protect the Sandra Jensens of metropolitan Toronto and any other urban area where, despite warnings and parental supervision, young pre-school children wander on to very busy railway tracks.

This particular track has some notoriety because it is the same track on which the famous chemical derailment occurred two years ago in Mississauga; it is the same line. Had that