

Mr. CHEVRIER: The Department of Reconstruction and Supply.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Then I shall take it up under that department. In the meantime I should like to have the minister's reaction to the other matter.

Mr. CHEVRIER: There is provision in the Canadian National-Canadian Pacific Act for cooperation between the two railways to cover a case such as he has mentioned. Since I have been in the Department of Transport, I have never acted in the capacity of arbitrator, although I have been requested from time to time to do so. The matter he has discussed is one which should be brought to the attention of the two railway companies, with particular reference to the application of the act. The Canadian National-Canadian Pacific Act was enacted with a view to coordinating the services of the two railway companies. If the hon. member would write to the railway companies and make reference to that act I believe consideration would be given to his request.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: The board of transport commissioners does not handle that.

Mr. CHEVRIER: The board of transport commissioners would handle it if an application were made by the parties concerned to complete the line and to coordinate the service. It has jurisdiction.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Petitions have been coming in asking for improvement of the service. Perhaps we could make the representations the minister has suggested.

Mr. CHEVRIER: I do not know all the details, but in order to get the matter before the board of transport commissioners the case would have to be one which would come under the jurisdiction of that body. I do not know enough about the matter to say whether it does or not, and that is why I have refrained from saying that it does. But if it does not, the other alternative is the Canadian National-Canadian Pacific Act.

Mr. LANGLOIS: Mr. Chairman, before making the remarks that I wish to make I should like to associate myself with the hon. member for Queens-Lunenburg who made such timely remarks in connection with the special bonus payable to seamen. If I understood correctly what my hon. friend said, his suggestion would entail another extension of the time in which seamen could put in claims for bonuses. As hon. members know, the expiry date was March 31. I strongly recommend to the minister that another extension be made.

[Mr. Chevrier.]

There are a few cases in my riding which were not considered because they had been made after March 31. In this connection it might be well to remind the committee that the men who served in the armed forces of Canada were given ten years in which to claim their gratuities, while our seamen were given only a few months to claim their special war bonus. During the war the proposed provisions in connection with our returned soldiers were largely publicized among the troops, and on demobilization the members of the forces had the free services of a rehabilitation counsellor who reminded them that they had something they could claim from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Moreover, the man's service record was made available to him by officers of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The merchant seaman sailed, not just on one ship, but on many ships during his years of service. When he was discharged from his last ship there was no one beside him to tell him what he was entitled to and he had no one to make the necessary computations. As I say, he was given only a few months; he was told that if he did not make his claim within such a period he would have no claim at all. If we are to compare the service rendered by our seamen with the services rendered by our soldiers, airmen and the men of our navy, it is only fair that we should give the merchant seaman an equal chance to claim the few benefits to which he is entitled and which he has truly earned.

Last year when I spoke on these estimates I reminded the Minister of Transport of the numerous representations which had been made during the past fifteen or twenty years with regard to the acquisition by the Canadian National Railways of the railroad line between Mont Joli and Matane and the extension of the line from Matane to Ste. Anne des Monts. I gave the committee at that time many good reasons in favour of that project and I shall not repeat them tonight. Last year the minister promised that he would ask the Canadian National Railways to investigate this matter further.

At the beginning of the present session I was given an opportunity of seeing the report which was subsequently made by the officials of the Canadian National Railways. I can quite understand why I was not able to obtain a copy of that report, but I wish to say that it was most disappointing in that it was quite incomplete. The report mentioned the lumbering industry which would be served by this railroad and it gave a wrong idea of the real picture. The manager of one lumber