

dous difference, in terms of the development of the province and its history, between the province of New Brunswick and the province of Ontario. One of the things that concerns me about the whole matter of language is that when we move headlong into language matters we can destroy the soil of good will. All of us must be very careful not to criticize efforts that might seem small to some but which in certain areas, having regard to the development and history of certain provinces, are really major steps.

Keith Spicer has said to the federal government and to the people of Canada that the federal government's language approach, the codification of the law, the overdesignation of bilingual positions, and all the tremendous emphasis on bilingualism, has generated an attitude in Canada which the premier of Ontario does not want to have generated in Ontario. That is what he said. If members of the House are really interested in advancing the cause, they should not use this forum carelessly. The Secretary of State (Mr. Roberts) should not have answered the questions of the hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier the other day in the way in which he answered them if we are to maintain an attitude of good will.

I have been across this country too and I have seen attitudes in Canada that are not helping with respect to second language training. What has happened in Canada is that suddenly, and I suppose finally, people are beginning to recognize that the place to begin with second language training, wherever one resides, is in the schools. It is to be hoped that it is an evolutionary process. If it ever becomes anything other than evolutionary, resentments will develop. Somehow we must balance that situation with other resentments that develop because the process has not moved swiftly enough.

An hon. Member: How do you balance rights?

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): The hon. member puts a good question. I guess it is a delicate act of statecraft. If there is anything indicative of the first ten years, anything that falls out of the federal Official Languages Act, it is that it is not, and has not been in terms of its implementation, an act of statecraft.

We hope that the approach involving the provinces will be proclamation seriatim, as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Young) said, as the situation develops, and that the federal government will admit there are differences in Canada. That is a very healthy thing. We in the House can damage good will and can undermine progress if we use the House irresponsibly. The danger that I see in the attitudes expressed in the questions the other day was precisely that. That is something we must avoid.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. The hour appointed for the consideration of private members' business has now expired. Therefore, I do now leave the Chair until 8 p.m.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

Railway Act

● (2002)

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

RAILWAY ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND AND REPEAL CERTAIN STATUTES

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Lang that Bill C-17, to amend the Canadian National Railways Capital Revision Act and the Railway Act and to amend and repeal certain other statutes in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications.

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, prior to the adjournment hour I mentioned I was very disturbed by the fact that the latest annual report of CN for 1976 made the assumption that this bill would be passed. It noted that the CN had actually capitalized the \$808 million accumulated depreciation and charged it against its assets. This was obviously sanctioned by CN auditors and by the government, and I consider it to be another affront to the parliamentary process and a clear example of this government's taking parliament for granted and of administration by decree.

I suppose in some respects we might consider ourselves fortunate because we have in the past had the dissolution of debts merely by a stroke of the pen through the estimates. It seems to me these are very important issues that should be debated in the House of Commons, and it is my hope that in future CN or any other government Crown corporation will not take it upon itself to assume that because it proposes something which would constitute the cancellation of a very massive debt parliament will simply rubber stamp it or give it that support.

This is not the first time CN has had a capital revision. As a matter of fact, this particular bill is the third such piece of legislation. Also it is interesting to note that this is the fourth time since its formation in 1922 that the CNR has been relieved of debt and interest costs. In addition to the \$808 million which is being cancelled under this bill, the total relief provided over that period is in excess of \$6.7 billion.

● (2012)

The first relief was provided for in the provisions of the Canadian National-Canadian Pacific Act of 1933. It provided for the government to contribute outright, commencing with the year 1932, all future deficits of the company. Prior to this the government had met the annual deficits of CNR by advances in the form of interest-bearing loans. From 1932 to 1976 the government contributed \$1,230 million to cover the