

Canadian National Railways Act

kind of appointments the government is going to make. There is going to be a request for an appointment from Prince Edward Island, as I said yesterday, and I suspect that the defeated candidate in Kings will be the appointee from Prince Edward Island.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pickersgill: I suspect that the defeated candidate in Esquimalt-Saanich—and I mean the defeated Tory candidate—will be the director from British Columbia. I suspect that the discarded provincial cabinet minister who is now seeking election as a Conservative candidate in Restigouche-Madawaska will end up on the board of the C.N.R.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pickersgill: No doubt—

Mr. Martineau: May I ask a question of the hon. member?

Mr. Pickersgill: I am in the middle of making a speech, which the hon. member for Greenwood wants to be short. I suspect the defeated Conservative candidate in Leeds, unless they prefer the defeated one in Peterborough or the defeated one in Niagara Falls, will be appointed from Ontario. Then if they are looking for a candidate from Quebec to keep a proper balance there is always, of course, the defeated candidate in Labelle.

So there will be no need, once this bill is forced through the house, by the majority, as I have no doubt it will be, to worry about the government making these appointments by the first of June. They will not have to wait, as they did in connection with the royal commission on medical care, for six or eight months though it was very urgent last December, we recall. They will not have to postpone it in the way everything else has been postponed, because on this occasion the opposition has made suggestions, which they complain we do not make, as to how this problem of theirs which they are going to create with this bill may be solved. I have made these suggestions perhaps half in jest, but only half; and if those precise appointments are not made, I suggest the appointments—there are only five—will be roughly of that character.

Mr. C. S. Smallwood (Battle River-Camrose): I wish to speak on this bill. I do not wish to take too much time, but I should like to answer some of the childish accusations which have been made by that party of gloom and despair.

I would draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member for Laurier and the hon. member for Hull said the appointment of these five new directors was decided upon in order to give Conservative candidates jobs.

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

Yesterday the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate talked about ward heeling. The hon. member for Laurier is afraid of political interference. I do not think people in glass houses should throw stones. When those people were in power for 22 years they built up an empire like Caesar had in Rome. Now they do not like to see it falling. They filled these corporations, they filled the C.N.R., with Liberal dead heels.

Now we want to put on five good, solid businessmen to bring this company out of a deficit position. I do not think it is right that we should be paying the top director \$75,000 to run the corporation. We have to get some good businessmen on this corporation to see whether they can reduce this deficit which the Canadian people are paying. I congratulate the minister and his department for seeing that these appointments are brought forward at the earliest possible date.

Mr. J. R. Keays (Iles-de-la-Madeleine): I listened with great interest to the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate make his amusing speech. I wonder if he has the same problems with the C.N.R. in his riding that I have in mine?

Mr. Pickersgill: Is the C.N.R. in your riding?

Mr. Keays: No. I noted that this morning the hon. member spent most of his time correcting statements he made yesterday, or conveying a different impression from the statements he made earlier. I know he calls this a threadbare bill and says it is of no importance. I am wondering whether that is just because the bill consists of only a few words asking parliament to approve an increase in the number of directors from seven to 12.

He succeeded, however, in his last few words in telling us why the official opposition are against this bill. It seems he is worried that the nominations which will be made may not be very popular with the thinking of his party. But throughout all the speeches made by the opposition no one seems to have wished to speak about the real need for increasing the number of directors on the board. Hon. members opposite seem to think that the political question is much more important than the financial problems which this corporation is facing.

It is true that many members of this house have attacked the present administration of the C.N.R., and perhaps rightly so. This is possibly one of the reasons the C.N.R. has moved ahead and reorganized its system into operating zones where the superintendents of these zones have more leeway in taking