

*Oral Questions***TRANSPORT****SUGGESTED INCREASE IN FEDERAL SHARE OF COST OF IMPROVING TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY IN NEWFOUNDLAND**

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. In view of the increased use of the Trans-Canada highway, if I can call it that, in Newfoundland the condition of which is worsening daily, and in view of the fact that the province of Newfoundland has requested a more generous share of funding rather than the 50-50 share offered by the minister, does the minister have the statistics to show the increased use and further deterioration? In order to give us that base, will he reconsider the cost-sharing on the strengthening program in Newfoundland?

● (1502)

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): We are fully aware of these transportation problems in Newfoundland and a commission is presently looking into the whole transportation situation in the province. As to the particular question the hon. member has raised, it is clear that the operating and maintenance of the highway to which he referred is a provincial responsibility. Our offer to share 50-50 is a fair and generous one; I hope the province will recognize that it is in fact a fair and generous offer and take advantage of it without delay so that the highway can be improved.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION**REQUEST FOR AGREEMENT PROVIDING FOR LARGER FEDERAL SHARE OF COST OF IMPROVING TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY IN NEWFOUNDLAND**

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): My supplementary is addressed to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion—that minister is a little more generous in his highways agreements with the Province of Newfoundland which he is prepared to conclude on a 90-10 basis. I have in mind the new highway which is being built to take in the great northern peninsula. In view of the fact that the Trans-Canada highway should be part of this whole highway would the minister consult with the minister responsible for highways in Newfoundland and his colleague to determine whether a proper transportation base by road can be provided under a 90-10 sharing arrangement, or, at least, 75-25?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Lersard (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to see that the hon. member from Newfoundland recognizes how useful the Department of Regional Economic Expansion is in his province in particular. Indeed we are taking part in the development and upgrading of secondary roads in his province and we have done so for some time now.

Up till now the Department of Regional Economic Expansion has not in any way taken part in the construction,

[Mr. Basford.]

upgrading or expansion of the Trans-Canada Highway. We have merely upgraded or constructed roads which did not exist in some parts of his province, because we considered that that was part of our responsibility in pursuing our objective of improving the economy of the so-called underprivileged areas. Until we have completed—at the very least what is a basic need in his province—the road system in that province to serve the various municipalities now without any roads, I believe it would not be appropriate that my department be concerned with the Trans-Canada Highway.

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[*English*]

PRIVILEGE**MR. STEVENS—URANIUM CARTEL—REPLY BY MINISTER**

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have received notice from the hon. member for York-Simcoe of a question of privilege. Before he begins to develop the point, I might indicate to him, in terms of the citation to which he has referred, that what the minister said yesterday fell short of accusing him of anything illegal or unparliamentary. In addition, the minister did not directly make an accusation but simply raised a question. But if the hon. member still wishes to make the point, I will hear him now.

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): As you have indicated, Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege of which I gave you notice yesterday and this morning. In answer to a question of mine about the government's uranium cartel, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said:

Mr. Speaker, the real question in my mind is whether the hon. member is serving Canadian interests or whether he is acting as an agent of a foreign corporation that is contending with Canadian regulations. We are all aware that the issues which he has been promoting are the issues which Westinghouse of the United States have been promoting because they are looking for a defence for their own mistakes.

Mr. Speaker, because I feel the government has taken actions which are harmful to Canadian interests, I am accused of being "an agent of a foreign corporation" and of actively promoting its interests. I do not believe this kind of insinuation or smear is acceptable under our practices in this House. In this connection, I would quote Standing Order 35 which reads in part:

No member shall speak disrespectfully of Her Majesty nor of any of the Royal family, nor of His Excellency or the person administering the Government of Canada; nor use offensive words against either House or against any member thereof.

I certainly find the imputation that my motives and actions are against the interests of my country, and that I am under external direction from Westinghouse, to be offensive. I would further cite Beauchesne, citation 110 at page 100 of the fourth edition. The final words read:

—to constitute a breach of privilege a libel upon a member must concern his character or conduct in his capacity as a member and the conduct or language on which the libel is based must be actions performed or words uttered in the actual transaction of the business of the House. Bad faith must be imputed and the charge cannot be indefinite.