

THE SENATE

Wednesday, November 19, 1980

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.
Prayers.

TRANSPORT

CANADIAN NATIONAL EXPRESS—CLOSING OF TERMINALS IN ATLANTIC REGION

Hon. G. I. Smith: Honourable senators, I wonder if I might be permitted to rise on what I think is a point of order. If, after I state it, His Honour the Speaker feels it is not a proper point of order, I shall abandon it for the moment.

Within the last half hour there has been brought to my attention the discussion about the possible closures of Canadian National Express terminals in the Atlantic region and the request that the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, of which I am chairman, invite officers of the CNR to appear before the committee.

I just want to say that I have noted, albeit very recently, the discussion. I am not sure as to the exact method of procedure, and I have not yet had the opportunity to consult the authorities upon whom we rely in these matters. I should be pleased to discuss with the appropriate officers of the Senate and the steering committee what would be the best procedure to bring about what seems to be the wishes of a number of honourable senators, as evidenced by the discussion last evening.

One way which suggests itself to me—and I do not know whether it would be the correct way or not—would be to have a motion adopted by the Senate referring this particular question to the Transport and Communications Committee, because I believe the committee has authority to deal only with those matters which are referred to it by motion. In any event, I want to assure honourable senators that their wishes have been noted, and that we will see what we can do towards the carrying out of those wishes.

While I realize I do not have to explain my absence from the Senate chamber last night, I might just say that I was in room 200 of the West Block as an alternate member replacing another member of the Special Joint Committee on the Constitution.

● (1405)

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, we certainly support the initiative to have the Transport and Communications Committee, of which Senator Smith is chairman, study the question raised in the Senate last night about the closing of CN Express terminals in the Atlantic region. I suppose the question could be debated in the chamber under an Inquiry, but as I understood it the consensus of honourable senators last night was that the sooner

this is brought before the committee the better. Senator Smith's suggestion that this might be accomplished by way of a motion in the Senate sounds worthy of support, and we on this side will be glad to consult with Senator Smith on the wording of the motion so that it can receive prompt attention when it is presented in the chamber.

I might add that we certainly understand honourable senators' current commitments to television which require them to be elsewhere on certain occasions.

The Hon. the Speaker: So I understand that a motion to this effect may be made at the appropriate time.

THE CONSTITUTION

SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE—CHANGE IN COMMONS MEMBERSHIP

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons to acquaint the Senate that the names of Messrs. Robinson, Tobin, Lapierre, Olivier, Bockstael and Tobin had been substituted for those of Messrs. Knowles, Lapierre, Tobin, Bockstael, Olivier and Lapierre on the list of members appointed to serve on the Special Joint Committee on the Constitution of Canada.

DOCUMENTS TABLED

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government) tabled:

Report on the Implementation of the Provisions of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Native Claims Settlement Act*, for the period November 11, 1975 to March 31, 1980, pursuant to section 10 of the said Act, Chapter 32, Statutes of Canada, 1976-77.

● (1410)

QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE CABINET

ABSENCE OF MINISTERS FROM CHAMBER

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, before commencing the Question Period