

specific instances, persons or quotes that I was referring to in December, 1976, but that was a perception of the public. I was pointing out how the public was concerned with how their tax dollars were spent. They want value for money. That philosophy is shared, I hope, by everybody in this House, including the hon. member. That is what we in Treasury Board are going to achieve.

Miss Campbell: Mr. Chairman, I welcome this opportunity today to speak on the estimates, not having spoken in this chamber for almost a year. I wish to direct some of my questions to the Minister of Transport. I will wait and see whether he needs any officials.

I welcome this opportunity to talk about the concerns of the constituency of South West Nova, concerns regarding transportation and how they relate. The Department of Transport is well aware of some of the concerns that any member of Parliament from that area would have. In particular, we have CN Marine which operates three ferries out of ports in that area. We are concerned about the direction CN Marine will be taking in this new Parliament along with the Department of Transport in order to provide better service to and from Nova Scotia to Saint John and Maine.

Today I want to talk about a couple of areas, Via Rail and the arrangements that have been made to provide service from Halifax to Yarmouth. I congratulate Via Rail. It is a Crown corporation that was given its powers during the time I was in office. I would like to ask about the financing of this one-year program that will come into effect in June.

I would like the minister to direct his attention to the Via Rail set-up in the area between Halifax and Yarmouth, going through the valley, and to tell me the cost that the department or the CTC will have to bear for the new arrangements to see whether the service will be improved and whether people will use it. The fact that there will be a return service daily as well as reduced fares, which I and many groups have advocated, will encourage people to use the service. This should be an energy saver for the province.

The next area of concern is the highway upgrading agreement between the province of Nova Scotia and the federal government which was entered into in early 1978. The purpose of that agreement was to upgrade and reinforce the highway in Nova Scotia. South West Nova was quite fortunate—

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. If I understand the hon. member's remarks properly, she now seems to be directing her remarks and possible questions to the Minister of Transport. As I understand it, the general understanding was that we would be dealing with the President of the Treasury Board, and when questions had ended with respect to that minister, we would then shift to another of the possibly three other ministers.

● (1530)

There is likely to be utter confusion if speakers direct questions to various ministers, and I should like a ruling. Are we going to deal with the President of the Treasury Board or

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do we shift to somebody else? As I indicated last evening, I sense an inference that people, especially on the government side, and, possibly, in the NDP, were wanting to shelter the President of the Treasury Board, that somehow they had no questions for the President of the Treasury Board; they were not concerned about spending levels in this country or about rising deficits. If the hon. member is saying, in effect, that she has no concern about the cost overruns which have been revealed, no concern about these rising expenditures, I think we should get the air cleared. Is it not true that we are supposed to be dealing with the President of the Treasury Board in Committee of the Whole at the present time? If so, let's get on with it.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Chairman, I am afraid the hon. member for York-Peel is a little "off" in his understanding of what is happening.

Mr. Stevens: You speak for yourself.

Mr. Knowles: I shall tell the hon. member for York-Peel that we are now discussing in Committee of the Whole clause 2 of the bill and clause 2 provides for fractions of every estimate in the book. So any member who gets the floor can speak to any aspect of the estimates he wishes.

As opposition parties we have said we would like four ministers to be here—the President of the Treasury Board, the Minister of Transport, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In other words, we cannot complain if the other ministers are not here, but the member who gets the floor nevertheless has the right to speak to whatever section of the estimates he pleases. Having spent yesterday with the President of the Treasury Board we have decided that our speakers who get the floor today, in their turn, will deal first with the Minister of Transport, then with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and finally with the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. I believe Your Honour will have to recognize, considering what we are debating under clause 2 of the bill, that that procedure is perfectly in order, and so is the hon. member for South West Nova.

Mr. Collenette: Mr. Chairman, I wish to confirm what has been said by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. I am sure the hon. member for York-Peel has inadvertently forgotten the rules.

Mr. Stevens: Oh, no. Agreements mean something over here.

Mr. Collenette: First of all, the rule is that on consideration of an appropriation bill in Committee of the Whole it is within the right of any hon. member to question any minister. The hon. member spoke about agreements. It was agreed among the House leaders that the opposition would designate several ministers whom they would like to question intensively. Yesterday, the President of the Treasury Board was here all afternoon. Other ministers were present but there were indications from the other side that they wanted to stay with the