

living and whose people are reasonable and rational, he would want to withdraw his disparaging remarks about Newfoundland and leave on the record something in little better taste—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lundrigan:** If that comment is not in order—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. The hon. member knows that the rules of the House apply to him as well as to other hon. members. With respect, I think there is no point of order.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to contribute to the debate on Bill C-186 which, in my view, is of considerable import since it aims at allotting several hundreds of millions of dollars to the upgrading of railway services across Canada.

The recommendation contains something which is quite fantastic, and I quote:

—to authorize Her Majesty to make loans to the Canadian National Railway Company and Air Canada to meet deficiencies in operating revenues to June 30, 1971, any such loans to be repaid from revenues of the railway company and Air Canada or, if revenues prove insufficient, by subsequent deficit appropriation by Parliament.

It is quite fantastic that a Crown corporation can table on a new appropriation should its operating revenue show a deficit. Furthermore, when considering reports submitted by Canadian National Railways, it appears at first glance that this deficit recurs almost every year.

I think the hon. member for Abitibi (Mr. Laprise) pointed out in his speech that every year, and last year particularly, CNR operations showed a profit, taking into account the interest paid.

Now a bill is placed before the House in order to authorize capital expenditures for the year 1970 of about \$229 million and of about \$80 million for the year 1971. With regard to the purchase of equipment a vote for \$163 million for the year 1971 is requested.

Towards the end of the bill, there is a provision aimed at avoiding deficits, if possible. In fact, it reads as follows:

Where, at any time before the 1st day of July, 1971, the available revenues of the National System are not sufficient to pay all the operating and income charges of the National System as and when due, the Minister of Finance, upon application by the National Company approved by the Minister of Transport, may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, place at the disposal of the National Company such amounts as may be required to enable the National Company to meet all such charges.

It is the duty of hon. members to take all necessary means so that as much light as possible can be shed on CNR operations, services and plans for improvement to make sure that appropriations granted by Parliament will be really used in the interest of the Canadian people.

Earlier an NDP member presented a motion for the discussion of the case of the CNR pensioners. I remember

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that I raised the matter in February last and I even called the attention of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) to this extremely important problem. He made me that promise in a formal reply in Parliament and in a letter dated February 16 in which he told me:

This matter is now under consideration and your comments in that respect of which I have taken due note, will be brought to the attention of those concerned.

I do hope that after more than six months, those people have given serious consideration to the problem of the CNR pensioners so that the pension plan can be improved and the pensioners, who have done a lot for their country, can be happier.

On December 31, 1968, the pension fund in trust according to the financial statement amounted to \$1,414,744,356. I believe that it would no doubt be possible to review such funds and the freezing of pensions in order to grant equitable payments to retired railwaymen. The increased cost of living should be taken into account so that they also can derive benefit from their pensions and enjoy a decent living.

No doubt the request for funds is justified but I should like to obtain satisfactory replies establishing that such appropriations are really needed.

In my constituency they intend to close many railway stations. The CNR authorities called a meeting in Armagh, in Bellechasse County, on June 22, 1970, to inform people about the proposed changes. They call it a service centre meeting.

The CN authorities provided detailed reasons justifying the proposed changes and the closing of the stations. However, something astonished me: even though they had invited the mayors and representatives of the various municipalities, they had forgotten to invite me. Possibly the postal service was responsible for the blunder.

I made an official remark on the matter at the meeting and one of the CN representatives assured me that he had sent an invitation to the hon. member for Bellechasse. I learned that the meeting would be held through a telegram addressed to me by the secretary of the municipality of Saint-Damien, municipality where there is a very important railway station and which takes strong exception to the closing of that station.

I attended the meeting, which was very interesting, and I learned there about the C.N.R.'s plans to relocate stations and change the present services.

In spite of that, I received numerous protests from the municipalities along the railway line. I naturally forwarded them to the responsible minister in order that he may peruse them and consider the situation more carefully.

It is sometimes said that railway stations are closed precisely because their operations show a deficit.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to intervene more particularly in connection with the Saint-Damien station in Bellechasse constituency. The figures show that the operations of that station are not showing a deficit. Indeed operations are increasing sensibly, since in 1968, the turnover