

The Address—Mr. Mazankowski

However, let me go to a matter about which the Minister at that time was the most prominent spokesman, certainly in the Opposition. I hope the Minister who said on September 13 last year:

I have to tell you, Mr. Chairman, that on the basis of our candid assessment this country is clearly not ready for the dismantlement of the Crow.

He went on to say:

—the goal of our amendments will be to maintain the existing Crow rate for the producers of Canada—

And guaranteed in its present statutory form until at least 1985-86. The Minister went on further to say:

We are of the opinion that on the evidence that has been presented to this committee it is clearly in the best interest of the producer to retain the Crow.

Would the Minister mind reporting to the House about the position and policy of his Party which concerns his Department, and tell us if he is going to put the Crow rate freeze on? And will he make it retroactive to August 1st last?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Hon. Member asked that question, although it was sort of convoluted.

Mr. Benjamin: I just quoted the Minister. If that is convoluted, tough.

Mr. Mazankowski: Well, that was not the policy which was stated during the last election campaign, and the Hon. Member knows that. So he should not try to mislead, distort and manipulate.

Mr. Tobin: You are too sensitive.

Mr. Mazankowski: No, the Minister is not sensitive at all.

Mr. Tobin: Yes, he is.

Mr. Mazankowski: No, certainly not. I have ten minutes. I can take more time. I am trying to handle as many questions as I possibly can.

Mr. Tobin: You have a thin skin.

Mr. Mazankowski: No, I do not have a thin skin, either.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order.

Mr. Mazankowski: The position of our Party was that the Government would freeze existing freight rates paid by producers from any further increase pending the results of the legislation's review mechanism and the producers' ability to pay. The stated freight rate at that time was the one which was announced on April 27, 1984, which was set for the 1984-85 crop year.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport with respect to the railways. The Minister will know very well of my concern, which is shared with a great many others, with respect to the issue of cabooseless trains. I hope he will be following up the request of the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) with respect to holding

hearings, not only in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Moncton and Ottawa, but also in those other cities in which the Minister himself earlier requested the CRTC to hold hearings.

My question pertains, Mr. Speaker, to a comment made by the President of the CNR with respect to the future possibilities of manufacturing programs at the CN shops in Transcona. The President of the CNR, Dr. LeClair, is reported to have said that the construction of coal cars there—and the Minister will remember this program—was an accident and that it was a one time occurrence and not likely to recur. Does the Minister know, first of all, that it was not a one-time occurrence? There was a wood chip program there and at least one other manufacturing program, so it is not a one-time occurrence. Those of us concerned about Transcona did not understand that it was an accident; we thought it was a new step forward in manufacturing for western Canada where this kind of work could be done on site. Is the Minister taking an interest in this and will he try to ensure that manufacturing possibilities are indeed distributed fairly across the country and that Transcona will continue to be taken into consideration as the site for future programs of this nature.

• (1540)

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, in answer to the first part of the question, I think it is fair to say, with respect to the hearings on the pre-testing of the cabooseless trains, that that was an initiative taken by myself and my colleagues, and I appreciate the support of the Members opposite. I just want to make it very clear that the initiative was taken by myself and by Members on this side. There have been requests for additional hearings and I have communicated that request to the CTC and await its response.

Regarding the second part of the question, I have to confess that I am not familiar with the statement to which the Hon. Member referred. I would be very pleased to look into that matter and take the Hon. Member's submission as a representation. I can tell him that because CN is a national railroad system owned by the people of Canada, it is important that the contracts for supplies, materials and equipment should be reflected in a purchasing plan which will take into consideration all regions of the country, and the Transcona shop should not be excluded.

Ms. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister a question regarding shipping, although I know he comes from an inland riding. He will recall that his former short-lived Government had some fairly positive proposals to do something about Canadian shipping. I would like to know whether he and his Government have any plans or suggestions that would help to stimulate Canadian shipping. In addition, what are his views on a Canadian merchant marine?

Mr. Mazankowski: As a matter of fact, we have a number of initiatives to stimulate the shipbuilding industry, and part of the rationalization for the upgrading of the eastern ferry system involves very intricately the acquisition of new vessels. There will be four new vessels coming on stream, one of which