

Adjournment Debate

are totally independent and which could benefit from this legislation. You will agree, Sir, that the small businesses are what create most of the employment. Since British Columbia and Alberta have the highest increases in unemployment in Canada since the recession hit, we are particularly concerned that if there is a promise for employment that there be a delivery system for that promise.

In this context, I think of all the cement companies which could be making railway ties or all the conduits. There are all kinds of ancillary benefits which ought to be coming to western Canada.

It took me somewhat by surprise, when I asked the Minister about this ten days ago in the House, that the first example he brought to my attention was in Sydney, Nova Scotia, and I quote from page 3639 of *Hansard*:

I take into account the contract recently let by the CNR for new steel rails to Sysco in Sydney.

I have no objection, Mr. Speaker, to that at all. If there is any area of the country which needs employment, and that kind of a contract, it is Sydney, Nova Scotia. They do need that kind of work. What bothers me is not that it received the contract, but that when I posed the question to the Minister in the House he could not quickly or spontaneously think of an example where the west, and particularly British Columbia, was going to get any contracts, or had any contracts assigned to them as a result of the Crow legislation. Therefore, I am here expanding on my concern, not because I am badgering the Government, but with the hope that in the minutes which the Parliamentary Secretary has to answer my question she will be able to give me some specific information as to how companies in the Fraser Valley and throughout British Columbia can get access to those jobs which are supposed to be coming to our part of the country. How do we go about bidding for these jobs?

Second, I understand that there is a considerable pool of money set aside by the responsible department for the granting of moneys to companies who are at present not in a position to deliver the volume or, indeed, even the product which the railways will be looking for. With access to that grant money, there would be expansion possibilities for some of the smaller companies, and perhaps enough diversification would be possible within some of these companies so that they could provide some of the product which the railways will be needing in the several years ahead when this expansion is proceeded with as promised by the Government.

I would like the Parliamentary Secretary to tell me in very clear terms how the Government is going to provide information to the companies so that they can bid on all of these contracts? Can she assure me that the bidding will be fair, and that the small companies will receive just as much access to those jobs and contracts as the large companies?

• (1815)

Finally, to what extent are the small companies going to get access to the grants in order that they might expand and have access to the contract possibilities available to the large com-

panies? I am looking for that kind of answer. I hope the Parliamentary Secretary will be very fulsome in her reply.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Éva Côté (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in answer to the Hon. Member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta (Mr. Friesen), I would like to comment particularly on the employment situation in British Columbia.

Data from Statistics Canada show that the deseasonalized employment figure for British Columbia increased 5,000 or 0.4 per cent, between March and April, to 1,186,000. This is the first increase after three months of decline. The total increase for the country as a whole was 27,000 in April. The Minister is confident that business activity and employment in the province will go on recovering, thanks in particular to the resolution of current labour problems. Returning to the specific question of the changes to grain transportation in Western Canada and jobs that should accrue in the area, the Hon. Member referred to seminars held in various parts of Canada. True, some seminars were held on the matter of supply in the major Western cities. Because of discussions there, more companies now are included on the CNR and CPR lists of qualified bidders.

You will appreciate, Mr. Speaker, that I do not wish to give the list today; it is a fact, however, the Minister met with representatives of the Builders' Association of British Columbia and he later wrote CNR and CPR to invite them, along with their main contractors, to a seminar on supply in Kamloops on June 5 and 6, 1984. There will probably be more such seminars elsewhere in Western Canada.

Further, the Minister publicly stated at the Calgary seminar on railway equipment and facility renewal, to which the Hon. Member alluded, that Section 29(3) of the Act is very much in his mind. Under that Section, railways are required as far as possible to use goods and services from the area where they have capital investments. The Minister expects the CNR and CPR to change their purchasing policies and make sure especially that they award their building contracts to regional or local firms and obtain the supplies they need within the area where they are doing this upgrading work.

We also know that the Minister is working very closely with his colleague the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Lumley) to set up the Western Transportation Industrial Development Program, in an effort to increase, develop and diversify the opportunities for the railways to purchase their supplies in Western Canada. Consultations in this regard are going on now with both the CNR and CPR. The results of these and other efforts should become more evident as soon as the railways start awarding contracts for this year and many years to come. The Minister of Transport (Mr. Axworthy) and his colleagues are striving to ensure that all Western provinces derive greater benefits from the work being done in their area. But the corporations which would like to be considered as