

• (1520)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS AND AIR CANADA

PROVISION FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURES AND GUARANTEEING OF SECURITIES AND DEBENTURES

The House resumed, from Monday, March 6, consideration of the motion of Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton) that Bill C-4, to authorize the provision of moneys to meet certain capital expenditures of the Canadian National Railways system and Air Canada for the period from January 1, 1971, to June 30, 1972, and to authorize the guarantee by Her Majesty of certain securities to be issued by the Canadian National Railway Company and certain debentures to be issued by Air Canada, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications.

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, continuing from where members left off on Monday on the CNR financing bill, I should like first of all to say that the remarks of my colleagues which were placed on the record on Monday perhaps cover the major reasons members from the east coast of Canada are taking part in this debate. For the last several years, going back to about 1965, I have had occasion to travel from St. John's, Newfoundland, across to Edmonton, Alberta on Canadian National Railways and, of course, since then on dozens of occasions have indulged in trips from the Maritimes to western Canada as well as from the Toronto-Montreal area back and forth to Ottawa. I am always fascinated by the pronouncement which seems to highlight the advertisements of Canadian National. In their advertising program, they state that they are involved in building the Canadian dream.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. May we have order, please. The hon. member for Gander-Twillingate has the floor, but there are so many conversations being carried on that it is very difficult for the Chair to follow the hon. member's interesting pronouncements.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a contradictory situation we have this afternoon. Some hon. members cannot keep quiet, and some other hon. members have decided to rest in peace. It is an unusual House. I have never known the House to be quite so lively in some respects, and quite so dead in some others. I remember an occasion on which I was travelling by train from Toronto to Ottawa. I got on the train and was escorted to one of the most luxurious cars the Canadian National has. It is a space-age car in which you have several levers to adjust your seat. It is a beautiful car with most luxurious upholstery. I was in the wrong place by the way, because my pass only permits me to travel in a second-class compartment. Without having paid the difference in the price of the ticket I was placed there.

Before getting shoved into the second-class I observed a beautiful thing. Along came a porter with hors-d'œuvres, shrimp, mushrooms and other doodads. Then, there were drinks and a person came along with white towels asking

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what time the passengers would like to dine. He spoke about the menu and asked whether we would like roast duckling with some kind of a sauce, an orange sauce perhaps, although I am not familiar with such things because I come from a fishing community. The service included all kinds of things which someone from the east coast would never have believed existed.

A few days earlier, I was getting off a bus in Newfoundland, also operated by the Canadian National Railways. A person needs to have a figure no larger than 34 inches in order to squat in the seats. There is one small bathroom in the rear which my colleague from St. John's West described. There is one lavatory for 39 persons. The comparison between this type of bus service and the luxurious train service is unbelievable. The fact is that the CNR provides a particular type of service for the urban parts of Canada and downgrades the service in the rural parts of Canada. The evidence of this is overwhelming.

The right hon. gentleman from Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), and other members from western Canada, complain daily about the elimination of substandard rail services into small towns and the difficulty this causes throughout rural Canada. I have always contended that the government, through various programs including programs of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, is involved in the downgrading of rural Canada and the encouragement of a drifting toward urban centres. I think it is quite natural for people to look to areas of opportunity but I do not believe any government or any corporation has the right to bring in programs whereby the people in rural parts of Canada are placed at a disadvantage. Basically, this is what is happening because of the attitude of the government.

The government has an unstated policy which is realized only if one is sensitive to the formal policies which destroy rural life. In my area, several hundred communities are suffering and many of them could have been viable communities if there had been specific emphasis placed on rural development. In western Canada we see tumbleweed blowing down deserted streets. We see houses closed and dilapidated buildings. This downgrading of rural Canada is contributed to by the type of assistance policies we have in this country. I recall that my colleague pointed out many examples where Canadian National especially, and CPR, have specifically eliminated rail services which has led to the early discouragement of any interest in housing for those communities.

In our province we have a very serious situation. In 1968, I believe on June 3, Order R 2673 was issued which allowed Canadian National Railways to discontinue its rail passenger service. That order was upheld by the Canadian Transport Commission. Because of a loss of \$900,000 which was experienced in the last year of operation the government of this country through its official agency the Canadian Transport Commission eliminated the rail passenger service. This was one of the most tragic things which has happened to our province since it became part of Canada in 1949. This is not a matter involving only the Canadian Transport Commission. Perhaps I am exaggerating slightly, but I contend that there has been a plot between the Canadian Transport Commis-