

*Private Members' Business*

I know more about transportation. I will go so far as to say quite frankly that the public has a right to know the total payout. We all know members are under attack for their present pay package. In effect a member can retire, get a pension and get a job and do what is called double-dipping: still get federal money and/or a pension.

We have had some very notable individuals, fine Canadians, in the Public Service who have retired from whatever jobs they had, and who have then taken on something else. The total package has been in the \$200,000 to \$300,000 range. If the public were aware of that, the government would not be quite so accommodating in having individuals do this double-dipping by taking the second job, again with no reflection on the character or the competence of the individuals.

We have the interesting situation where the chief of defence staff, an honourable Canadian, Ramsey Withers, retired from the army. Then he became deputy minister of transport for several years. With his salary range of \$140,000 plus, together with whatever he was getting from his chief of staff pension, I would suggest he was over the \$200,000 range.

We also have the most interesting situation of an individual who appeared before the committee along with his co-executive officer. That was Mr. Denis de Belleval who came from the harbours board, a quasi-government agency, and became president of Canada Ports Corporation along with Ron Huntington, an ex-member from Vancouver, who was either the president or the chairman. I am not sure which was which. One was the chairman and one was the president. Then Mr. de Belleval became the president of VIA. He is a very fine Canadian, an interesting witness before the transport committee. For whatever reason some things did not work out and he did not serve his full term in VIA, and I believe that there was a golden handshake to move him along the way.

The public has a right to know what it was paying Mr. de Belleval as chairman or president of Canada Ports Corporation and what the golden handshake cost to move him into another field. Now he is executive officer of Lavalin. So be it. That is all good. He has a salary there too. But the public has a right to know.

I must say it is an irony and a fatal flaw in open government that we are not able to get public disclosure

of individual salaries. We have the interesting situation now with Air Canada, albeit a privatized corporation, where we have difficulty getting the pay of some of its top people, let alone directors' fees. If it merges with American Airlines and has interest in American Airlines, as with CN, with a couple of railway companies and a couple of trucking companies in the States, under American law they will have to disclose what they pay that Canadian officer and/or the Canadian director. Their laws are much more open.

In conclusion, I certainly think it is very interesting for either this government and/or a new Government of Canada to look at what President Clinton is trying to do and be aware of what he is doing to try to open up his government. That government is so much more open on this issue right now that it makes us seem as though we are still back in the Dark Ages meeting behind the bulrushes. That is not good enough for Canadians.

• (1130)

**Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to say a few words on this legislation brought forward by the hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants. In so doing I rise to support his proposal, which I think is a good one. I do not say in so doing that I speak on behalf of my party or the government. I speak as an individual.

In supporting his legislation it does not mean that I necessarily agree with everything he just said in his very interesting remarks. He did make a few comments with which I do not agree, but in principle I agree with the legislation.

As he has done so often, he is reflecting a perspective that is widely held among the general public. I must say I have known the hon. gentleman for a long time. In fact he was the very first member of Parliament I ever actually met. About 25 years ago when I was a graduate student at Dalhousie, I was doing a thesis on election campaigning in Nova Scotia. I wrote to every member of Parliament from Nova Scotia and asked for an interview. Only one of them granted me that interview and that was the hon. member for Annapolis Valley, I guess it was then called. I spent a very interesting day with him and really learned about politics. I have been learning from my hon. friend for many years since. Who knows? Some day I might actually get enough experience in this place that he might learn something from me.