

*Railways and Shipping Committee*

corporations, for which the government is responsible, reward its faithful employees with pensions like this?

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister at that time was referring to the basic pensions which amounted to \$25 per month and less which he said were being received by more than 3,000 retired C.N.R. employees. He pledged a Conservative government to revise pension regulations for retired railway employees, to remove what he called existing inequities and anomalies, and to provide a fair and reasonable basic pension. Mr. Speaker, the present government has been in office now for over a year. Certainly we have a right to ask them what they have done and what they intend to do with reference to this pledge given by the Conservative party to the Canadian National Railways retired employees. We have a right to ask them that, particularly in view of his words which I quoted from *Hansard* and the statement which he made as quoted from the *Globe and Mail*.

I should now like to turn to another matter, one which I am sure will interest the house, namely the question of transportation facilities in the Atlantic regions. While I am not free to refer to a debate which took place yesterday, I could not help but read the speech which was made by the Minister of Transport when dealing with a certain transportation and recall that he did not seem to be aware of the fact that an investigation had been started by the former Liberal administration into transportation facilities generally in the Atlantic provinces.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** I do not think the minister is listening at this point; he is preoccupied.

**Mr. Chevrier:** I should like to bring to his attention, in case he was not aware of this fact,—he did not seem to be aware of it yesterday—a statement made by the former minister of finance, Hon. Mr. Harris, in a budget speech made on March 14, 1957, and which can be found in *Hansard* for that year, in the second volume thereof, at page 2219. I quote:

In the view of the government we should now undertake a fresh and comprehensive examination of the entire transportation situation of the Atlantic provinces in order to determine what changes could contribute towards the economic welfare of the region.

Among other questions, we should consider how best to supplement or improve some of the present means of transport in order to improve the transportation system generally. In this way it might be possible for the Atlantic region to get more value from the present level of federal expenditures in this field and from any increased funds that might become available.

It is therefore the government's intention to launch an immediate review of the maritime transportation problem in general, and thereafter to put forward proposals as soon as feasible.

It is quite clear from that statement that the former administration did in fact launch an investigation into the transportation facilities of the maritime provinces, and did ask the Canadian National Railways, in particular, to give attention to that very important problem. Everyone knows of the part played by Canadian National Railways with respect to transportation facilities in those provinces; we know of the existence of their rail system in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; we know of their facilities in Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, and we also recall that they provide and operate various services by sea along the Newfoundland coast, the ferry between the mainland and Prince Edward Island and the service between Bar Harbor and Yarmouth and so on. They were to tell the Department of Transport what changes in their opinion ought to be made in existing services so as to provide more adequate transportation facilities in the Atlantic provinces.

This motion which is being made to establish a committee on railways and shipping provides, it seems to me, an opportunity to ask the government, or more particularly to ask the minister, what has happened to this matter, and I would think that the minister should give to the house some information, firstly, as to what has happened with reference to the survey mentioned by the former minister the Hon. Mr. Harris and, secondly, what has been the result of the survey undertaken in the Atlantic provinces by the Canadian National Railways.

I would now like to deal with another matter which is of equal importance to the Atlantic provinces, namely the subsidies granted to those provinces under the Maritime Freight Rates Act. Last year the Liberal government decided to increase from 20 to 30 per cent the subsidy on traffic movement out of what is known as the select territory into other parts of Canada. That increase was made because it was believed that by increasing the subsidy from 20 per cent to 30 per cent, in other words, making an increase of 50 per cent in the subvention on outbound traffic, that much would be accomplished towards meeting the changed conditions with respect to transportation which had come about since the subsidy was originally fixed, a good many years ago.

I know it is a fact that persons interested in transportation, particularly in the maritime provinces, expressed a good deal of satisfaction with the action taken by the previous administration. However, the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) did not seem to think that that was enough, in fact, I believe I can quote words of his to indicate that even that increase from 20 to 30 per