

Marine Atlantic Inc.

I would not advise anybody to go on the night crossing because that presents a problem. If you like driving in the day time, and you are leaving Ottawa, Toronto or Montreal in the day time, it will take you about 22 hours. You would normally arrive at the ferry boat at night. There is a problem in that CN Marine, this new Crown Corporation and the federal Government, have always had the policy that the boat that crosses to Newfoundland is not designed as a hotel. In other words, there are never enough cabins available. It is a great pleasure when you get on the boat and you start out to sea, but in the middle of the night you obviously want to sleep. There are not enough cabins, so the people sleep—you guessed it—on the floor. When you walk down through the ferry boat you have to be careful that you do not step on somebody's feet or head, or something like that. I have always wondered why CN Marine and this new Crown Corporation, Marine Atlantic Inc. have this policy that the boat is not a hotel. How many times has somebody from CN Marine, or any Government, any Minister of Transport, including this one appeared before the committee and said that we are really not operating a hotel. This leads to all kinds of problems. You can imagine children and elderly people sleeping on the floor, but that is the way it has been throughout the years, that somehow by some rationale we have allowed these boats to operate without enough cabin space.

At one point in time they even used to supply pillows, but that was stopped, or they would give you a free blanket, but that was stopped. They sell you a chair for an extra \$10 called a "Day-Nighter" which can actually be tilted back. The other chairs on the boats are designed in such a way that it is absolutely impossible to lie down. In other words, they were made so that they will not tilt back. They have fixed arm rests which do not move, so one's only choice is, of course, to sleep on the floor. There is lots of sitting space on the chairs on all of the boats, but one cannot sit on the chairs because one's feet would be on someone's head. That has been the policy of CN Marine or, as we call it today, Marine Atlantic Inc. Is it any wonder that tourists are discouraged from returning to Newfoundland, having gone there once on the night crossing? After coming across on that boat at night one has to take a motel room during the day to get over it. That is one problem I wanted to outline.

● (1220)

The problem, of course, is one of management and of the Government. Those are the fellows, the accountants who sit in head office who cause the problem. That is the problem with the way CN Marine has operated over the years, and that is going to be the problem with this new Crown corporation, Marine Atlantic Inc.

There is something else wrong with this new Crown corporation which was created in order to save the Government \$20 million. Things seem to have been arranged so as not to accommodate most of the people. In other words, in Newfoundland one gets on a bus instead of a train and travels across Newfoundland. Then one gets on a boat—there is no helicopter service. One has to go by boat to cross the ocean,

and then one gets on a train to cross Canada. There is a separate Crown corporation which controls the bus. We have another Crown corporation which controls the boat and another Crown corporation which controls the train, and never these three shall meet on scheduling. The bus will meet the boat if it is not inconvenient, but the train leaves at exactly ten minutes after nine o'clock in the morning from Sydney. When one looks at the schedule of CN Marine or, as we call it now, Marine Atlantic Inc., we find one would have to spend overnight in Sydney in order to meet the train.

An Hon. Member: There is nothing wrong with that.

Mr. Baker: Yes, it is good for the motel business in Sydney, Nova Scotia. I like Sydney. I think it is a wonderful place. Cape Breton is the closest thing you can find to Newfoundland for excellence. I have little confidence in an organization which cannot match three schedules to allow people to have a convenient trip across this country. A lot of people travel that way because they do not have the financial resources to take a plane. A man looking for a job in Alberta, perhaps in your riding, Mr. Speaker, in Edmonton, would take the bus, the ferry boat and the train. He cannot afford sleepers. He takes that service and goes across the country. Sometimes women with children take that route. Sometimes whole families. But here we have, under the umbrella of the federal Government, three separate transportation systems with no links. That is absolutely atrocious. That is enough to make one vote against every single Bill which comes to this Chamber having anything to do with Canadian National.

If you spoke to the people who travel on that system, as I have, Mr. Speaker, you would come to the conclusion that the whole set-up needs to be examined by a judge of the Supreme Court. I have seen people taking a bus and having to spend 24 hours waiting for the boat because the weather was bad and the bus was late. The boat went on without them and they had to wait for the next boat. They get on the other side and have to spend another 24 hours waiting for the train to leave. There are women and children, whole families, going through that procedure because they do not have the money to take a plane. That is not good enough. If that were happening anywhere else in Canada it would not be allowed. The Government would step in.

I have now covered two points. First, one does not cross in the night time if one does not have a prearranged, guaranteed, prepaid cabin. If one does not have in writing that one definitely has a cabin, I would not advise it, unless one wants to spend the next morning in a motel somewhere sleeping it off. Second, those poor people who cannot afford to take a plane are being discriminated against to an incredible degree because there is no matching of schedules.

Let me move on to what is going to happen to those employees who will be displaced because the federal Government wants to save \$20 million by creating a Crown corporation. I will just deal with one aspect, pension transferability when these people are laid off. If one is from the Province of