

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

respect of transportation in the Atlantic provinces. Surely that is the reason we had this reference from parliament. If there are serious deficiencies in transportation in the Atlantic provinces, they reach critical proportions in the province of Newfoundland.

The hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce said that the Newfoundland government placed high priority on trunk roads. Yes, we need trunk roads but until we have them we should have our railway. This is the whole point of the argument. The government and the people of Newfoundland cannot afford to build the system of trunk roads which is so necessary to provide an over-all transportation grid to serve the people of Newfoundland.

I commend to hon. members that they go to Newfoundland, as did the members of the transport committee, where they would see these deficiencies. All we have is a narrow gauge railway going from east to west paralleled by a narrow gauge trans-Canada highway which is below trans-Canada highway standards because we could not afford to build up to those standards. It is one of the most dangerous highways in Canada. Only yesterday six members of my constituency were killed in a head-on collision on that highway. One of these days there may even be an accident involving a C.N. bus on one of these highways in which the hon. members seem to have so much confidence.

The government of Newfoundland is reasonable notwithstanding the fact that it is a Liberal government. The members of the House of Assembly are reasonable people. All we want is to maintain the rail transportation service in Newfoundland for at least two years. Then the whole hearing would be reopened by the Canadian Transport Commission with a view to examining the situation as it exists at that time. Unless a miracle happens at that time it will become very evident—unless in the next two years we get the \$500 million we need to build a trunks system of highways—that the situation is drastic. It will be found that the buses cannot provide the service and it will be found that it will be necessary not only to continue the buses but also the rail passenger service until the province, with the help of rich uncle Ottawa, as the premier of Newfoundland calls it, can afford to pick itself up out of the transportation doldrums and provide a system of transportation such as the people in the rest of Canada take for granted. Only then can we get the true picture.

[Mr. McGrath.]

If this report is sent back to the committee perhaps it will be forced to die there. If the house accepts the amendment of the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce it will be very difficult if not impossible for the committee to examine this matter in the course of the preparation of its final report. If this amendment passes and the report does go back to the committee it will be a dark day for parliament and a dark day for the people of Newfoundland.

• (5:30 p.m.)

Mr. Allmand: May I put a question to the hon. member. He said he would answer my question when he concluded his remarks. The hon. member referred to the terms of union of Newfoundland and suggested that in those terms of union were provisions that prevented the parliament of Canada and the C.T.C. from discontinuing rail passenger service in Newfoundland. He suggested there is a strong legal argument against what the C.T.C. has done. If that is so, why has there not been an appeal in law to the Supreme Court of Canada?

Mr. McGrath: There is a very interesting question, Mr. Speaker, which opens up a very interesting subject. If hon. gentlemen will restrain themselves for a moment, I will answer the question. The hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce knows as well as I do, as does the hon. member for LaSalle, that we tried without success on a number of occasions to get the vice-chairman of the transport commission, who is supposed to be learned in the law, to come before the committee and explain this very point of law. Our request was categorically and callously refused by the chairman of the transport commission. I suspect that the real hand behind this whole gambit is the Machiavellian hand of the Czar Pickersgill.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I should like at this point to advise the house that the questions to be raised at the time of the adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Portneuf (Mr. Godin—Air Canada; the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles)—Income tax; the hon. member for Frontenac-Lennox and Addington (Mr. Alkenbrack)—Public buildings.