

*Oral Questions*

variable entrance requirements in this House, preferably before C-21 comes back?

**Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. As he knows, Bill C-21 is in the Senate. It has been there for some time and they are doing very little with it as far as I understand it. The minister is going to appear in the Senate next week so we may see a little movement on their part.

As the member knows, the variable entrance rates are already in the legislation because he travelled on the committee across the country.

There are numerous other programs in Bill C-21 that will help employment in the Atlantic region and other parts of Canada, particularly for workers over 65 and those who are in industries that are having some difficulty.

We are looking forward to the passage of the bill by the Senate. Perhaps if the member has any friends in the Senate he might like to encourage them to pass the legislation.

**Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn):** Mr. Speaker, I do not suppose I have any friends in the Senate but I have a lot of friends in the working communities. And they are all employed too.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

**Mr. Fisher:** I travelled with that committee and I know what the entrance requirements are in C-21. What I said before is absolutely true, that it is a lot worse than the variable entrance requirements would otherwise be.

In the absence of the Prime Minister, I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he is going to get this government to pass this legislation and stop holding those unemployed workers up for ransom?

**Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, we have passed the legislation. Were you asleep? Where were you? We passed the legislation and the variable entry requirements for people in the Atlantic provinces are not worse, they are better. They would still only have to work for 10 weeks in order to qualify. The member

should go back and re-read the minutes and he would know what he is talking about.

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**TRANSPORTATION**

**Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. VIA Rail has a Canrailpass which is similar to the Eurail pass and allows Canadians to see Canada for as little as possible.

I have a copy of a notice which was sent to all VIA reservation desks that, effective March 31 Canrailpasses are only available for sale to permanent residents of countries other than Canada. Some Canadians can purchase passes if they are members of a club, such as the Ambassador Club, but they can only use it for off-peak travel, with limited quantities available. Why are Canadians second class citizens on their rail service?

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that VIA Rail is not the only company in the world which operates in this way.

In any case, the internal operations of the corporation are not, on a daily basis, determined by the Minister of Transport. I think my friend should address his question to the board or the management of VIA Rail which would be able to give the answer that the hon. member requests.

**Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the same minister. At this time in our country's history when Canadians see regions of Canada pitted one against the other, leading to distrust by some of Canadians of other Canadians and when we are concerned about a weakening confederation, why would this government permit one of the mechanisms which allows Canadians to see Canada, to meet other Canadians and to explore our great country to be cancelled? Why is this government allowing VIA rail to cancel the Canrailpass?

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, to repeat what I said, I think this type of system is also used in Europe and, I suppose, for the same reason that it is used here in Canada. I will say that the operation of the company and the way its policies are arrived at is determined by the management of VIA Rail. Therefore, the question should be addressed to the management of VIA Rail.