

C.N.R. Financing and Guarantee Bill

Mr. Byrne: I think it is quite obvious, since this bill is in the name of the Minister of Finance, that he will have all the relevant information.

Mr. McCleave: This is like playing ball, and I am now in the big leagues. Let me ask the Minister of Finance whether he has the information for us this evening as to the capital projects covered by the borrowing transaction set forth in this measure.

• (9:40 p.m.)

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Chairman, some time this spring the operating and capital budgets of the C.N.R. for 1967 were tabled in the House of Commons. These are a matter of record in the house.

Mr. McCleave: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps now I can get around to the question I wanted to put. It is simply this: How much consultation is there between the Department of Transport and the Canadian National Railways with regard to capital projects? I make this point because I think the C.N.R. could be misled into making substantial outlays for capital projects if it did not have the ear of the Minister of Transport and if it were not privy to the thinking of that hon. gentleman. The specific case in point involves a massive investment of the C.N.R., and therefore of the public of Canada, in the ocean terminals in Halifax, terminals which, as we know, are being used less over the years because of the drop in winter traffic.

This was my reason for being interested in the planned capital improvements—which nobody seems to know about here, although they are apparently contained in some document—and this was why I put the question to the parliamentary secretary and later to the Minister of Finance. It seems to me that the C.N.R. might be misled by the policy of the Department of Transport as announced by the minister, under which operations in the gulf of St. Lawrence and in the St. Lawrence river are carried out solely for the purpose of flood control. We in Halifax know differently. We know that the operations there are cutting seriously into the winter business in the ports of Halifax and Saint John. Therefore I think I raised a legitimate question on whether the capital expenditures being permitted by the government will be realised in the use of these facilities, or whether they will be allowed to gather rust. The ice breaking operations in the St. Lawrence gulf have increased substantially from

[Mr. McCleave.]

1962 until the present time. I wish to give some figures briefly because I do not want to belabour that point, except as it relates to the C.N.R. spending.

Some \$3.5 million was spent in 1962 of which \$1.9 million was spent on ice breaking operations in the St. Lawrence river and the gulf of St. Lawrence. By 1966, of a total budget of \$4.3 million for all of Canada, \$2.83 million went into the operation in the St. Lawrence river and the St. Lawrence gulf, which is a rise from 54 per cent to 66½ per cent in the total budget for ice breaking.

Mr. Starr: May I beg the indulgence of the hon. member for Halifax and interrupt him to bring to the attention of the government the fact that it appears we will not be able to complete consideration of this bill tonight. However, for the sake of expediting the business of the house, I suggest that we terminate the debate on this bill, and proceed to items No. 39 and 43 which we are prepared to pass before ten o'clock. We are now on second reading of item No. 39 and we are prepared to pass this item as well as item No. 43, the second reading of Bill S-18.

Mr. Prittie: Mr. Chairman, before the house leader gets any wrong ideas about what can be accomplished, I should like to say that we are not agreeable to passing item No. 39, although we might agree to the passage of item No. 43.

Mr. Starr: In that case may I suggest that we consider item No. 43 first, and then go on to item No. 39?

Mr. Nicholson: I wonder whether the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond realizes the seriousness of the situation and the need for additional judges in the Supreme Court of British Columbia. It is impossible to have cases heard in that province today with less than a year's delay, because of the shortage of judges. Now we have an opportunity to correct that situation.

Mr. Prittie: Mr. Chairman, I realize the seriousness of the situation, but I do not think one day will make any difference. We could have dealt with the matter in September and October, if it were that urgent.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall I rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again at the next sitting of the house?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Progress reported.