

any particular Crown corporation that may presently exist.

Perhaps it is not so much from the point of view of opposition to the financing of the CNR and the Air Canada structure that this bill should be discussed in this House, but rather from the point of view that the behaviour of those in charge of this socialized structure is such that members have been denied the opportunity to express opinions, let alone be part of the decision making process. We have been denied the right to express an opinion prior to the time a deal has become a *fait accompli* and then presented as part of the financing bill for the CNR and Air Canada.

Parliament is thus denied its proper right, and the public at large their right to know what is becoming of federal money, and how it is being spent. The hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) outlined this in great detail. I think his remarks should be considered almost classic and referred to frequently by members of this House who have any concern whatsoever for the expenditure of our public moneys and the knowledge that the public is entitled to prior to such expenditure. This has been denied to the House.

The committee which has met in respect of this bill is another mockery of the opportunity for a member elected by the public to participate in the economic structure of this country. When one has an hour and a half or perhaps two hours twice a week over a three or four week period to discuss an item of the significance of this one, certainly that is virtually no opportunity at all to get an intelligent idea as to how one should express himself on behalf of his constituency in particular, and Canada in general. Yet, this is just another example of how the committee procedure of this House conceals from the public the knowledge of their own affairs.

The transportation system, under the public ownership structure, has been subjected to pressures of a political nature. This has made it virtually impossible for the system to either serve the Canadian people or make a profit on their behalf. It has been compelled, perhaps at some expense, to build the hotels which have been criticized. It has been compelled by the public and political pressures to render services which were not economic. The House is further compelled, as a result of these political pressures, to annually underwrite the losses which the public ownership vehicle has accrued over the years. At no time has there been any directive, publicly noted, from the government saying to this publicly owned structure: It is your responsibility to both serve and to make a profit; it is your responsibility to at least render service to Canada at a minimal cost and prove that you have exercised proper efficiency in your managerial practices on behalf of the Canadian public. It has been some time since there has been any indication that the government has directed the transportation system of this country to give consideration to the necessary national requirements in respect of development, the basic reason for the initial construction of our present transportation system. The challenge of that responsibility has not been met.

At a recent transport committee meeting which did not deal with this particular bill we found ourselves almost completely frustrated in an effort to obtain information in

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respect of the operation of the railroads, in respect of the function played by the Canadian Transport Commission, and in respect of the authority that can and should be exercised by the minister. We found we were in a virtually helpless position with ineffective legislation and less effective administration, and the combination of the two spells out the death knell of any long-term transportation policy in Canada's best interests.

We find that in this bill continuing evidence to support our belief that there is proliferation of the infringement upon the private world by public ownership. There seems to be no justification given by the Department of Transport for authorizing the railway to invest in de Havilland or in any other industry as it may desire or for authorizing Air Canada to invest in the aerospace industry without an examination of the long-term profitability or the long-term advantage to the Canadian population by virtue of this participation. These are the things which give me great cause for concern as this bill is about to become law by virtue of the vote that will be taken. There is no way this House can deny the funds which have been spent. They must be granted, but it is with great regret I say this when I see the infringement of the parliamentary right of members of this House to participate in the structure of the nationally owned transportation system we have.

● (1600)

The Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) does not seem to have any grave concern about the development of the port structure of this country. Whether you are from Vancouver or from Saint John, whether you are in a fishing port or on the St. Lawrence seaway, it seems that Port development is allowed to coast. Its relationship to national development is not given proper consideration. We might consider, for instance, the opportunity we have to develop the port of Saint John and the opportunity Canada has to develop with it. With its railroad connections, the port of Saint John could be developed as a container and other type of port for the benefit of the whole Canadian economy. This has not been considered by the Minister of Transport. Apparently no money is to be made available for a major development in this area. Are we to be served on the Atlantic coast by another domain merely because our government fails to recognize the value of this port to Canada and to the whole east coast of North America.

This House and the Department of Transport will dilly-dally until we learn that somewhere along the coast someone chose to build an island to create a port to service the east coast of the North American continent. With a little initiative on the part of this government such development could be created at the port of Saint John for the benefit of all Canada. It would provide service to all the people of the east coast of this continent. This plan, however, is not forthcoming. The view of the government today is land locked. The government looks inward at development in the main metropolitan areas of Canada and cannot see the relative value of the periphery of this country as it plans its policies in respect of transportation or anything else.

I am very much concerned about the basic operation, for instance, of Air Canada. At one of the meetings of the transportation committee we heard a great song and dance