

I asked him about ten days ago about the almost weekly increases in fares by Air Canada. I think since I asked him that question they have increased their fares twice, and indeed, since last March they have increased their fares six times. It seems they are running ahead of the consumer price index. They increase their fares even faster than inflation is going up.

Has the minister inquired into these exorbitant and continuing increases which are placing a heavy burden on the public, and has he inquired from the Canadian Transport Commission as to what action they are prepared to take, and has he received an answer?

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): No information has been received as yet on that question, although I understand that today there was another public statement by Air Canada with respect to a requested air fare increase.

CANADIAN NATIONAL EXPRESS—CLOSING OF TERMINALS IN ATLANTIC REGION

Hon. Daniel Riley: Honourable senators, I have been intrigued by the questions asked by Senator Phillips and Senator Muir with respect to the closing down of CN Express offices in a number of communities, particularly in the Atlantic provinces, with the consequent loss of a number of jobs. As the Leader of the Government has said there may be a possibility of minimizing the effects by keeping some of these people employed by transferring them to other locations, and to take care of others by means of early retirement. I want to give a little preamble to my question.

Some years ago I tried to determine the position of the CNR with respect to the subsidiary company which looks after the express end of the business. I was told first before the Motor Carrier Board in New Brunswick, and subsequently by Dr. Bandeen and his officials before the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, that this subsidiary company—I have forgotten the name of it now—just gives its bills to the CNR at the end of the year and the CNR reimburses its expenses on a non-profit basis. But if the case is now as it was then, the subsidiary company has a large amount of assets. I do not have the annual report of the CNR before me now, but it is alarming to think that the possibility exists that these assets of a subsidiary company have been dissipated.

So my question is: Would it not be possible—instead of having the Leader of the Government take notices of these questions and bring in an answer from Dr. Bandeen and his officials—to ask Dr. Bandeen and his officials to come voluntarily before the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications and explain all this, because it is a deep mystery to me.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, in the course of discharging my responsibilities I endeavour to provide as much information as possible, including some made available to me by various ministers and by the office of the Right Honourable the Prime Minister. I see nothing wrong, however, in the Standing Senate Commit-

tee on Transport and Communications asking Dr. Bandeen to appear before them. That is a decision, however, for the committee to take.

I might point out, too, that the chairman of that committee is our distinguished colleague, serving in the opposition, Senator Smith. The suggestion, I am sure, will be given careful consideration by Senator Smith and his colleagues on that committee.

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS—CURTAILMENT IN SERVICES

Hon. Frederick W. Rowe: Honourable senators, my question relates by coincidence to the questions asked by Senator Riley and Senator Muir a few moments ago. We all know that there have been some very considerable reductions in Canadian National services in various parts of Canada, and particularly in the railroad operations themselves. And now in related activities we are informed that there are likely to be further drastic reductions. In my own province, for example, the number of people employed in railroad services today must be infinitesimally small compared with the number employed 20 years ago.

I was wondering, and I think Senator Muir was hinting at this, if the Leader of the Government could obtain some figures on this subject. For example, could he find out for us if there have been comparable proportionate reductions in the number of Canadian National employees at the executive level in that 20-year period? We know there has been a drastic reduction in the number of employees in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and parts of western Canada, and I have been wondering if there have been proportionate reductions among the executive personnel. Perhaps it would be possible to get some figures on this.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, that is indeed an interesting question posed by Senator Rowe. However, the honourable senator may consider placing that as a written question on the Order Paper. I would be pleased to take it as notice and obtain any information that I can but long, detailed and statistical questions like that are perhaps better posed in written form.

Hon. Daniel Riley: Honourable senators, I hope the Leader of the Government will not think I am being antagonistic, but this is a very important question. Perhaps he has misunderstood me. It is quite possible for two of us to move and second a motion or an inquiry that Dr. Bandeen and his officials be asked to appear before the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications. But in order to elaborate and explain this whole complex question of the CNR and the CN Express, I think that it would be proper, in order to provide us with further details, if the Leader of the Government in the Senate suggested to Dr. Bandeen that there are a number of people in the Senate disturbed by this move to close up CN Express offices. He might suggest to him that he and his officials might request an opportunity to come before the committee in order to satisfy us and explain more fully the CNR's position in respect to this.