

Canadian National Railways Act

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. member for Saskatoon and parliamentary secretary rising on a point of order?

Mr. Jones: Yes, Mr. Speaker; I am rising on a point of order. The hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate has made an accusation that the speeches that were made last night in this house on war veterans allowances were a series of repetitions.

Mr. Speaker: Order. If the hon. member would indicate what his point of order is, he might then substantiate it.

Mr. Jones: I am trying to reach this matter, Mr. Speaker, perhaps on a question of privilege. I think it is a matter of privilege. I listened very closely to the speeches that were made. If I may, I should like to lay the foundation—

Mr. Speaker: So far the parliamentary secretary is only contradicting what was said. What he has said so far indicates no point of order or matter of privilege, to my mind.

Mr. Jones: If I may do so, I should like to state briefly the matter of privilege.

Mr. Hellyer: A moment ago it was a point of order.

Mr. Jones: The question of privilege is simply this. The statement made by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate was quite wrong and cast a reflection on all members of this house. The speeches they made were very thoughtful speeches on this particular subject.

An hon. Member: They were not congratulatory speeches at all.

Mr. Speaker: I think the aspersion cast on the members of the house was not severe enough to make it a matter of privilege.

Mr. Pickersgill: As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I did not mention any member of the house at all. I made one simple statement. I said that speeches of congratulation to the Minister of Veterans Affairs were not debate. That is all I said. I did not refer to any member of the house. I merely made a simple statement that speeches of that character were not debate. I think Your Honour could not disagree with that statement. However, it is quite irrelevant, and I made it in answer to an irrelevant question asked by the house leader. I would not have thought of making it had it not been for the house leader's interruption.

If I might be permitted to proceed to discuss the measure before the house, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that we could make more progress, though hon. gentlemen do not seem to wish to have it.

Mr. Jones: Will the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Pickersgill: Certainly.

Mr. Jones: In view of the remarks he has made to the effect that these matters that have come before the house in the last day or two are of such little importance, is he able to explain to us why the hon. member for Laurier made no less than 40 interjections, including three speeches, in one day and the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate approximately 29 or 30 in one day?

Mr. Pickersgill: I have no trouble at all in answering that question. That is precisely why I am speaking on this matter. The hon. member for Laurier on the previous bill was protesting that the government did not bring in a solution to the problem but brought back the same old stopgap. We as an opposition are trying to do what we have a right and a duty to do. We are trying to draw attention to the fact that, ever since the by-election campaign started, the government has ceased to do the public business.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pickersgill: They are afraid to bring any contentious matter before this house.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The time for discussion of the order of the business of the house has expired. If the hon. member pursues the course he is following, other hon. members will be entitled to take the same course and the bill will not be referred to.

Mr. Chevrier: The hon. member was answering a question.

Mr. Speaker: I suggest that we return to the principle of the bill, which is to increase the number of directors of the C.N.R. from seven to 12.

Mr. Pickersgill: That is what I have been seeking to do ever since I rose in my place, Mr. Speaker, and I have been diverted from doing so by hon. gentlemen opposite.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pickersgill: The reason I rose last evening was to draw attention to the fact that no argument had been made by the Minister of Transport, who seems to be rather a spectator as far as this debate is concerned. I am not criticizing the Minister of Transport on that account.

Mr. Balcer: I have never been so bored in all my life.

Mr. Pickersgill: Before the Minister of Transport made his interjection I was going