

Transportation

Prime Minister whether Canada in its centennial year will commemorate the birthday on January 11 of Sir John A. Macdonald the statesman who was recognized by Sir Wilfrid Laurier as the architect of Confederation. A number of schools across Canada have, without any direction or dictation, suggested this as a means of indicating that we in Canada commemorate those who gave us our nation.

Let me point out that party considerations disappear after one dies; that is one of the characteristics of our country. The hon. gentleman from Lotbinière is always abolishing things here, but political considerations are forgotten after one dies.

An hon. Member: They are not forgotten here.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Possibly they are not forgotten by Liberals sitting in the house, but they are forgotten by Liberals in all parts of Canada, and in fact by all people regardless of party affiliation. I ask the Prime Minister whether he will not bring this to the attention of the cabinet.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my right hon. friend that no one wants to abolish Sir John A. Macdonald, who stands pre-eminent in our history as one of the Fathers of Confederation. I think the suggestion the right hon. gentleman has made, and which has been under consideration for some time now, is a very good one indeed. I think we should act on it.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Will the house allow me to say this to the Prime Minister: Thank you for that recognition and for that answer.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, after what has been said here, I move that we adjourn now.

● (3:50 p.m.)

TRANSPORTATION

PROVISION FOR DEFINITION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL POLICY

The house resumed, from Tuesday, December 20, consideration in committee of Bill No. C-231 to define and implement a national transportation policy for Canada, to amend the Railway Act and other acts in consequence thereof and to enact other consequential provisions—Mr. Pickersgill—Mr. Batten in the chair.

On clause 1—*National transportation policy.*

The Chairman: When the committee rose last evening clause 1 was under discussion.

[Translation]

Mr. Mongrain: Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to repeat what I said yesterday. I will limit my comments to the new Canadian Transport Commission, and once more urge the minister to have the proper agency take, as soon as possible, the necessary steps to force the railways to make their stations more presentable, by cleaning up the surroundings and painting the buildings so that the millions of visitors to our country may see something other than a series of slums, since that is what most of our stations are at present; indeed, they seem to belong to another day and age and are in the worst state of neglect.

I would also like to put on record—at the request of a correspondent—the transcript of a complaint which he made to the Board of Transport Commissioners with respect to the C.N.R. I have not had the opportunity to check personally the allegations in the complaint, but I nevertheless wish to put it on the record so that the proper authorities may make the necessary investigations and see if it is necessary to intervene, because the complaint seems serious enough. I repeat that it is the transcript of a complaint forwarded to the Board of Transport Commissioners for Canada; the title reads as follows:

The C.N.R. is threatened with serious dangers.

I am complaining against the C.N.R. which, for the past two or three years, has not been providing adequate protection to train passengers and to its employees.

It is all due to the fact that the C.N.R. has decided to make some changes in the management of stations. It has centralized the work in certain stations and appointed terminal traffic managers, assistant terminal traffic managers, staff supervisors freight sales, to manage and supervise those stations. Those gentlemen are not qualified to fill those positions. They have control over operating agents and operators without having the required qualifications, because those appointed to such positions, express and freight agents, know nothing about the regulations governing the operation of trains.

In addition, those men have authority over agents and operators. It is shameful for the C.N.R. to do such things, because you, the Board of Transport Commissioners, have issued a manual of regulations on railway security that the operators and agents must know and put into practice. Those unqualified men who have authority over agents and operators often give orders against security. I feel that you, the Board of Transport Commissioners, should require the C.N.R. to appoint qualified persons to those positions.

Those terminal traffic managers and others are so ignorant in matters of railway security that they claim that operators must carry out orders last of all, and force them to become clerks.