

Transportation Policies

say that they might have appreciated having had more time to present and prepare more briefs, if these people who are concerned with dry docks, shipbuilding, and transportation questions in general, as well as facilities for containerization, had been seriously involved in this business, they would have known that we had made a commitment last year to visit the east coast. Had they been more aware, they would have known that it was stated in the House, recorded in *Hansard*, and in the proceedings of the committee on Transport and Communications, that we fully intended to visit the east coast, to visit Newfoundland, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia to discuss these matters and to hear the views of these people. Similarly, the Canadian Transport Commission will be visiting Halifax and Fredericton on Friday, June 10. They will be in my riding of Restigouche and will come to the city of Campbellton to give an opportunity to the people there to express their views regarding the need for a future rail passenger service in eastern Canada.

I ask you, what more can the government do? It is conducting meetings in the very areas where we are being criticized. It is meeting with the various associations and organizations concerned with transportation problems in the area. The Canadian Transport Commission, under the direction of the Hon. Edgar Benson, is conducting hearings this year with respect to the rail passenger service. Last year the CTC spent many months in the Atlantic provinces deliberating on the whole question of the air passenger service in that region. On top of that the government has expended \$300 million in subsidies for transportation in the Atlantic area. In addition—and this is not promise but a fact—recently the Minister of Transport announced that \$125 million would be spent right away to assist the different modes of transport in the east, such as rail, air, ferry, and bus transportation.

In spite of all these positive actions by the government we see before us today this most negative motion brought in by the official opposition stating that they condemn the minister's transportation policy in the Atlantic provinces. How can a member of parliament from the Atlantic area rise in the House and make such a statement, let alone carry the responsibility of being the official transportation critic of the official opposition? It is quite beyond me to understand that. It comes right down to what I have said recently—although one who supports our democratic system would be reluctant to say this—that we have no opposition at all. They show no creativity, no innovation, no new ideas.

This is not a tired opposition; it is no opposition. They do not refer to the positive actions of the government such as the \$285 million or \$300 million paid out in subsidies. They do not refer to the inquiries and studies being carried out by the CTC with respect to the rail passenger service. They will not comment about the inquiry that was carried out last year with respect to the air passenger service. All they do is make measly statements here about the lack of effectiveness of the coast-guard, for example, when anyone who had the opportunity to take part in the visit of the transport committee to the Atlantic area recently would know that a substantial amount of the

[Mr. Harquail.]

taxpayers' money is being invested by the government in the Atlantic area to do the best job that can be done there.

Let me say a few words about the dedication of the MOT officials. You will not find another civil servant or federal government employee who is more dedicated than the employees of the MOT, whether we talk about the people who work in the Department of Transport or about employees of Crown corporations. To a man these are good Canadians, God fearing, hard working.

Mr. Benjamin: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harquail: They contribute in a most positive way to the work of the department. Yet we have to sit here and listen to the negative approach of the opposition. They do not seem capable of at least acknowledging some of the positive moves of the government. Yet the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East in introducing the motion—

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I listened for a few moments to what might pass for a speech. I am referring to the remarks made by the hon. member for Restigouche (Mr. Harquail). I was in the House when the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall), about whom he is speaking, made his speech with respect to the motion that was put forward. I listened very carefully to this speech. As a matter of fact I seconded the motion. I thought I did not hear the hon. member correctly the first time, but when he repeated that the speech of the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East was negative I felt it necessary to rise on a point of order. It seems obvious to me that the hon. member for Restigouche was somewhere—I do not know where—when the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East was making his speech, but he was not in the Chamber.

Mr. Paproski: Right, he was not in the Chamber.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): The speech was hardly as it was reported by the hon. member for Restigouche.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): I have listened to the hon. member but I fail to find a point of order in what he said.

Mr. Harquail: I sympathize with you tonight, Mr. Speaker, when I hear you observe that you cannot see a point of order in what the hon. member said. It is not the first time that we have witnessed a dismal performance from the opposition House leader. He said that he seconded the opposition motion. Obviously he is in dire straits so far as communication with the members of his own caucus is concerned. How can he, as House leader of the official opposition, second the motion of the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East, and at the same time deny in the most negative terms our right to enjoy the benefits of the \$125 million to alleviate some of our transportation problems in the east? Surely the hon. member can do better than to come in at this late hour and make interjections and raise points of order. He should stop and reconsider his