

*Transportation Policy*

from the policy announced today by the Minister of Transport, even if such a conclusion is undistinguishable in his statement, that the federal government will continue to subsidize interprovincial ferryboats indiscriminately?

**Mr. Marchand (Langelier):** No, Mr. Speaker, not indiscriminately, but where the need arises and is obvious. We are surely willing to help. If we acted otherwise, the end result would be that anyone anywhere could ask for ferryboat services, and we would have to grant such services under our policy. But in those locations where ferryboat services prove essential and necessary to bring people closer together in this vast country of ours, we are more than willing to consider such requests seriously.

(English)

**Mr. McKinley:** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister which relates to the policy put into effect in the 1967 transportation bill. This policy caused a lot of trouble in the southwestern Ontario region. The policy I have in mind required the CN to apply to the CTC for the abandonment of a rail line passenger service in order to obtain a subsidy. The company could not apply directly for the subsidy but was required to apply to have the passenger service abandoned. This involved public hearings, followed by a direction of the CTC that a subsidy would be paid before the passenger service could be continued.

Unfortunately under this policy many passenger services were abandoned. Some of them were not efficient, fast, or even clean, as the minister stated he would like to see them become. As a result the services were abandoned when probably they would not have been had the company not had to go through this matter of applying for abandonment before obtaining the subsidy. Will the minister change this policy in the new bill he is bringing forward?

**Mr. Marchand (Langelier):** Mr. Speaker, the Hall Commission is investigating this matter and we want to wait until that commission has made its recommendation. I have a number of figures in my head and cannot remember the exact mileages involved. I believe there are a certain number of miles of track in respect of which abandonment has been frozen until the year 2000, and approximately another 1,000 or 2,000 miles until the year 1980. Right now there are only 500 miles which are unprotected. This commission is making an inquiry in order to determine whether we should maintain or abandon these services. I do not think there is any immediate problem in this field.

**Mr. McKinley:** Mr. Speaker, my concern is with what has happened in the past, in about 1970 or 1971. Many rail passenger services were abandoned in southwestern Ontario. The minister said there will be an effort to coordinate fully bus and rail passenger services. This is of great necessity in that area. Would the minister elaborate on how he intends to go about this, as I believe he has been trying to do something in this area for the last three or four years?

**Mr. Marchand (Langelier):** Mr. Speaker, we want to integrate these services in order to give better service to Canadians, but I do not think we should do silly things. As

[Mr. Béchard.]

an example of what I have in mind let me say that if we have a train that carries an average of seven passengers on a Friday at a cost of several hundred dollars per passenger, there is something wrong with the service. People like to have train service because, although they use their cars normally, when there is a storm they can jump on the train. The train services are useful in this way. The fact is that we have some trains on which it costs \$7,000 per year to carry the passengers, and this is not reasonable. This does not mean we should not have passenger train service, but perhaps we should provide better service so that these trains are used to a greater extent than they have been in the past. I do not think all commuter trains—

**Mr. McKinley:** What the minister is saying is correct, but in the case of southwestern Ontario poor usage of the service came about because of poor scheduling of trains. The companies were trying to prove a loss in order to obtain a subsidy, but they had to apply to abandon the service first, and in many cases the CTC allowed the services to be abandoned. I feel that if the companies had been given the subsidy these trains would still be in service.

For instance, the train going into Goderich from Toronto arrived at twelve o'clock and left again at one, so in order to do any business in Toronto the passengers had to stay at least two and a half days. That was the reason the trains carried very few passengers, not because the people did not want a service from Goderich through Clinton and Seaforth into Toronto, returning at night.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I am sure this discussion could go on for some time. However, it being six o'clock, pursuant to order made earlier this day, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put the question.

[Translation]

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of this House to adopt the said motion?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

**Mr. Speaker:** It being six o'clock I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock tonight.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

[English]

#### AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

#### SALARIES ACT

##### AMENDMENT TO INCREASE SALARIES OF LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of the Privy Council)** moved that Bill C-24, to amend the Salaries Act, as reported (without amendment) from the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.