

the most efficient system of transportation, which I am sure we can do in this case.

[Translation]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Chairman, I wish to say a few words on this resolution. Like other honourable members, we are quite happy to see the government introduce in the house at this time the legislation which reads as follows:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to authorize the Canadian National Railway to make capital expenditures including investment in securities of affiliated companies in the calendar year 1968 not exceeding in the aggregate \$264,400,000, to make capital expenditures in the first six months of the calendar year 1969 not exceeding in the aggregate \$75,000,000 for discharging obligations incurred prior to the 1st day of January, 1969, to enter into contracts prior to the 1st day of July, 1969, for equipment, additions and conversions requiring payments after the calendar year 1968 not exceeding \$90,000,000, to borrow either from Her Majesty or by means of issues of securities guaranteed by Her Majesty an amount not exceeding \$75,000,000 for investing in securities of Air Canada—

Mr. Chairman, I want to take this opportunity to ask the minister whether he could not, when introducing this legislation, tell us what are the various affiliated companies to which he referred. Furthermore, we should like to know the nominal value of the holdings of each of these companies and, in particular, whether some of them are in the trucking business.

I think that most of the citizens in our area, as those in all Canada of course, would be extremely interested to know these details, so that we may appreciate better the importance of these companies, and mainly the services they can provide all across Canada, without any discrimination with regard to some areas.

Upon reading the sums of money which are mentioned in this resolution, and I quote:

—including investments not exceeding in the aggregate \$264,400,000—

I think, of course, of my area, the Lac Saint-Jean area which is called Saguenay-Lac Saint-Jean where, according to the general opinion of the people we are certainly not assisted in the field of transportation in view of the fact that the Canadian National Railway Company certainly does not do everything it can to provide an adequate service.

We propose to try, when this legislation is introduced, to explain to the minister the needs of the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean area, because we find that the railways made it possible for our region to grow. But if the

Canadian National Railways

present situation continues, the railways will also be responsible for its economic slowdown. In fact, year after year, services are discontinued. Last year, for instance, the postal rail service was abandoned and replaced by the delivery by truck. I fail to see the advantage of that measure or the saving it represents, because it is much more expensive to deliver mail by truck than by rail.

I think that was done in a deliberate effort to take every possible source of income away from the railways in our region in order finally to abolish the freight service, and today there is talk of discontinuing the passenger service.

Even freight services were cancelled to be replaced by one train only. I have no objection, since this certainly means savings, but I think, Mr. Chairman, that besides the economic factor, we should take into consideration the service aspect of the matter. In fact, the railway service is first and foremost a service that has to be administered as economically as possible, but in our areas, consideration must also be given to the services given.

I especially draw the attention of the minister to our area where next year, even the passenger train between Chambord and Dolbeau might be cancelled.

If the Canadian National does that, it will be a retrograde step that will bring our people thirty years behind. It is alleged that such a cancellation is due to a slowdown in the transportation industry. I am not ready to admit that, Mr. Chairman. In my opinion, it is merely a lack of good will and reflection which may lead to the cancellation of this train.

I travel every week on that train. When we hear criticisms, Mr. Chairman, we realize that the lack of passengers is due to bad service. For example, we often hear a passenger from Montreal arriving in Dolbeau say: I have taken the train once, but I will never take it again, because the service is too poor, it takes 14 hours to come to Montreal from Dolbeau. I think that if the authorities of the C.N.R. had tried to improve the service—especially their railway service—the public would travel by the Canadian National Railways much more often than at the present time.

• (12:50 p.m.)

One can also read in the resolution and I quote:

—to borrow either from Her Majesty or by means of issues of securities guaranteed by Her Majesty an amount not exceeding \$75,000,000 for investing in securities of Air Canada—