

Adjournment Debate

[English]

However, there are many groups involved in the process, each putting forward a great diversity of concerns. Some of these concerns will be difficult to reconcile but the government is, and will be, working expeditiously to do this. The review of the act continues at this time.

Officials of the department are working hard to put together proposals that will resolve the outstanding issues, meet the concerns that have been expressed so far and at the same time uphold the integrity of the commitments already made by the government.

In closing, I think it is important to emphasize that as the government had predicted in *Toward Equality*, the courts have found so far that sexual orientation is encompassed by the guarantees of section 15 of the Charter. While the Charter does not apply to the private sector, these judicial decisions offer a significant degree of protection against legislation that would discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.

ROUTE CANADA

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, on June 18, I asked the Minister of Finance this follow-up question to a question I had asked a few days previous when he invited me to visit the trustee in bankruptcy with respect to the sale of Route Canada to Transport Route Canada Incorporated. After visiting the trustee in bankruptcy I said:

I am more convinced after spending at least three hours with the trustee that the 1,900 employees of CN Route never had a chance. They were doomed from the day the deal took place.

The minister answered that the company had been losing between \$40 and \$50 million a year. CN had to make a decision. They either had to shut down and terminate the jobs of the employees or sell the company as a going concern to the Fingold brothers.

• (1820)

That reply brings us here today because it was unsatisfactory because of the words, "it was sold as a going concern." We on this side of the House have been attempting to get a complete and total review of this particular transaction, that is, the sale by CNR of its transportation arm, CN Route Canada, to the group of investors in Toronto, the Fingold brothers and a person by the name of Manfred Ruhland.

We are constantly debating whether or not it was sold as a going concern. Let me advise those on the other side of the House that we will not give up on this debate until we have some satisfaction for those 1,900 workers who are affected by this terrible sale by CNR to these investors from Toronto.

As a result of that meeting and our follow-up on this side of the House, we have been trying to get before the Standing Committee on Transport a resolution and a motion passed that would allow all members of the House to review in complete detail the offer of purchase and sale and all particular matters as they pertain to this particular transaction. The one and only emphasis will be to protect the rights of those 1,900 people who were terminated who were former employees of the CNR and CN Transport. They were transferred to this new corporation and their rights were not protected in that transfer.

Let me bring those who are listening throughout Canada up to date. As of this morning, Thursday, October 18, there was a meeting called of the Standing Committee on Transport. The purpose of the meeting was to elect a chairman, since the chairman had resigned in the past week. The other matter to be discussed today at that standing committee was resuming consideration of my motion, pursuant to Standing Order 106. We wish to review the sale of CN Route Canada by Canadian National Railways to Transport Route Canada Inc., and the several other incorporated companies either involved in the sale or amalgamated as a result of that sale.

What happened at 9.30 this morning is something that I had never seen before at a committee meeting. The members of the Conservative Party that were on that committee failed to show up. In essence, the committee lacked a quorum and those items that were under consideration, particularly the item on the agenda that I just read, could not be addressed, could not be followed through, could not be voted on. As a result of further delay, those ill-affected employees are not being helped. This is another way to try to get this government to do something in the best interests of those employees and something that it is legally bound to do. It is morally bound to look after those employees of CNR.

By way of background, in 1986 CN Route sold its trucking arm to a company called Transport Route Canada Inc. Three people bought it for a sale price of