

Supply

These are the same assurances we have heard from the same Government during an election campaign about regional development being a sacred trust. If, Mr. Speaker, there is an election and you need a commitment to regional development you have got it. If there is an election and you need a commitment to no changes to the UIC, well you have got that too. If there is an election and you need a commitment to day care of \$4 billion or \$5 billion, my gosh, you have got that too. You ask the Prime Minister, "Can you afford all these?" "Every damn nickel has been accounted for", he says. Yes, Mr. Speaker, and as soon as that election is over a budget is brought in by "Mac the Knife" and every one of those commitments are shattered along with—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Boudria: That is Mike the Knife.

Mr. Tobin: —dozens of others and so too was the so-called commitment to VIA Rail by the Government.

What is at stake in the decision of the Minister of Finance and defended by his Minister of Transport? Some Minister of Transport, Mr. Speaker. He ought to be tarred and feathered and run out of town on a rail, transported away from this place.

He has presided over the disintegration of Canada's national transportation systems in a nation that was built on transportation. John A. Macdonald, that great Conservative Prime Minister had a vision of Canada, a great land mass from sea to sea, stretching from Atlantic to Pacific, from the southern boundaries to the north. He said this country can only be knit together by developing transportation systems which allow our people to move freely across our borders, to develop a flow of traffic and people and commerce east and west and not north and south.

That man, John A. Macdonald, who had a dream over 123 years ago, finds that dream being shattered and turned into a nightmare by these cousins, these people who have followed in his footsteps but have abandoned the path that he chose for this nation by destroying our basic transportation systems.

Some Hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Tobin: I say to the people of Canada that they ought not to be lulled by the phoney assurances of this Government. We have heard them in too many other areas. The people ought to understand that what is being

proposed by this Government is the total elimination of our rail passenger service.

The President of Transport 2000, a non-partisan, does not align himself with any political ideology and does not associate with any particular political party. He has but one objective and that is the maintenance of decent transportation systems for Canada, in particular rail transportation. The president of Transport 2000 has said, "It makes sense to me that there will remain only the Quebec City-Toronto corridor". One train to the east and only a tourist train in the west. We can see it coming.

It used to be that being a Canadian citizen was not a guarantee of equality, was not a guarantee that no matter where we lived or how we pursued a livelihood, we would all be equal. No one ever expected that and no one ever demanded that. Being a Canadian citizen used to be a guarantee of equal opportunity and a guarantee that in some fundamental basic areas, while we could not all be equal, notwithstanding our circumstance, citizenship carried with it some services available to all of us in equal measure no matter where we lived.

One of the fundamentals is health care. Another is the opportunity for a good education. Another is the basic rights afforded all citizens under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Another one, because of the very nature of this country's sparse population and its tremendous land mass, is the ability and freedom to move and not be penalized because of where you live.

For many Canadians VIA Rail is a fundamental right not only in terms of freight services but for passenger service as well. For the Government of Canada today to make an arbitrary decision that rail passenger service must be productive, efficient and profitable, after the Government has abandoned it for so many years and has not given it the tools to be productive, efficient and profitable, is an abandonment of the regions. It is an extension of the philosophy which says that if you do not live in the Quebec City-Windsor corridor you are a second class Canadian, because this Government takes its cue from the market-place, and if the market-place does not determine that you should have a certain level of service as far as this Government concerns, you do not exist.