

Canadian National Railways and Air Canada

I repeat, 20 years of service in the Armed Forces and 25 years in the Quebec Provincial Police. It is evident that the same privilege could be given to the railway employees who, in short, were also in the employ of the public service, night and day, during all their working life.

The old system under which the total pension could be paid only at the age of 65 is outmoded, in fact the majority of railway workers die before they reach that age.

A few days ago, the booklet entitled *In memoriam*, published this month by the railway companies, showed us that the people who are still working are right, as it gives a list of the deceased. The first nine on the list, who died in recent months, were aged 55, 52, 54, 49, 58, 53, 55, 45 and 51. The last six on the list were aged 45, 51, 55, 54, 57 and 51.

The CN financial statement is also proof that the employees die rather young. Indeed the 1971 statement reveals that only \$75 million were paid to retired employees while during the same period, the Canadian National collected \$261 million for a pension fund of \$1.454 billion.

Mr. Speaker, I think those employees toiled hard throughout their life; we are happy to support them in their claims and I believe they are right. Considering that the Montreal stevedores who were laid off last year got their full pension because the company could do without their services, I suggest similar measures could be applied in some cases of dismissals or transfers within the Canadian National.

It is obvious that the CN needs money and this bill proves it. However, we should support this bill on condition that we really agree that the Canadian National should get the credits they are asking for, provided they promise to look after all employee applications.

[English]

Mr. Walter C. Carter (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, I should warn you that because I represent a part of Canada where we have some very serious transportation problems, especially in connection with the CNR, I shall forgo the luxury of speaking extensively about what is happening in the rest of Canada. Other hon. members who have spoken before me have done a good job in pointing out to the House some of the transportation problems which they are facing in their areas. It is rather strange that the previous speaker, the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) who represents one of the most westerly parts of this country, and I, who represent the most easterly part of Canada, both have problems in our areas that are pretty well the same. It seems strange also that the culprit in our area in the east is the CNR and that in their case it is CN and the CPR.

The other day the Leader of the NDP (Mr. Lewis) replied in his usual eloquent way to the statement made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) on his return from China and said that Canada has a history without any colonial connections. He said that Canada had no connection with colonizing people or exploiting them to blacken the pages of its history. I am sure that is correct in the context in which the statement was made, but I am afraid that in certain parts of this country this government is guilty of the worst kind of colonialism which is exempli-

[Mr. Godin.]

fied by its attitude toward the Atlantic area and the other underdeveloped parts of Canada.

I cannot think of any other factor that has played a more regressive role in the development of eastern Canada, particularly in the development of my province of Newfoundland, than the policy of the CNR, or, maybe I should say, the lack of a policy on-the-part of this government in matters of transportation. We all heard the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) give the Newfoundland members advice some weeks ago when, in answer to questions regarding the ferry service connecting Port aux Basques with Newfoundland, he asked: "Why don't you learn to swim"? Of course, the minister must realize that that kind of advice does not go down too well in Newfoundland, nor would it go down well in any part of Canada, I suppose.

In Newfoundland we have a very serious situation at present because of the freight backlog that has now piled up in North Sydney, despite the fact that the minister elects to ignore this and tried to give the impression that all is well. This backlog does exist, and it exists at the expense of people living in Newfoundland who are now paying more for their food and other necessities of life than are any other people in Canada. The transportation system is such that it contributes to a large extent to our having to pay more than any other province for our food-stuffs, our building materials and other necessities. I have always held the view that the 90 miles of water that separates our province from the rest of Canada should be treated as any other part of the Trans-Canada highway, because to us it is the same as any other 90 mile stretch of that highway. Therefore, it is my feeling that it should not cost us any more to travel that 90 miles, or transport goods over that 90 miles, than it would cost people living in other parts of Canada to transport goods and themselves over a comparable distance of the Trans-Canada highway.

● (1630)

This afternoon during the question period I asked the Minister of Transport about the Argentia-North Sydney ferry. The minister complains that Canadian National does not have sufficient ships to move the goods bound for Newfoundland that are now stockpiling in North Sydney. He complains that there are inadequate storage areas and not sufficient facilities. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, there is a ferry service operating out of Argentia, which is part of my riding, to North Sydney and back, but it operates only four months of the year. There, we have a multimillion dollar facility that is lying dormant eight months of every year.

I contend that Canadian National, and of course the Department of Transport, should give immediate consideration to the possibility of having that ferry service operate on a year round basis. Not only would that have the effect of providing additional, badly needed service to the province, but it would also have the effect of eliminating some of the heavy traffic that is now using the Trans-Canada highway in Newfoundland, turning it into a very dangerous highway. I contend that freight bound for the eastern half of the province should be rerouted through St. John's, and Argentia.