

6. That provision be made by amendment of the Pension Plan rules for meaningful negotiation of the rules of the Plan.

7. That a full-scale independent investigation be made of the developments of the growth of pension monies in the Pension Trust Fund.

8. That the Company make immediate provision for the supplementing of the pensions of present pensioners.

Mr. Speaker, representatives of pensioners have come from all parts of the country to discuss the pensioners' hardships and to say that they have had enough and that the conditions in which they lived were inhuman.

Being convinced that they have involuntarily supplied electoral funds to the Liberal Party, which had promised to establish a just society, they hope that they will not be forgotten and will receive their share. They do not ask for a share of all taxes collected, but only for what they have paid, as they should have a right to expect in an honest society.

Through their depositions, CN pensioners have, in the last year, shown a bit of the truth. I believe that this game of "hide-and-seek" with public funds has lasted long enough.

In connection with the CN employees' Superannuation Fund, it is obvious that pollution has reached a dangerous level, because this company is a Crown corporation financed with public money. I believe that the taxpayers are also entitled to know everything about this matter and that all hon. members will agree that, if we cannot have honest administration of Crown corporations, it is useless to talk of a just society.

As for the government, which may have sold its silence, it is time to make amends through putting into application the measures proposed by those most directly concerned.

• (3:20 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Before I notice the next speaker, this might be an appropriate time to rule on the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo (Mr. Howe).

When Bill C-186 was last before the House on November 30, 1970, the hon. member for Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo proposed an amendment as follows:

That Bill C-186 be not now read a second time, as in the opinion of this House, the making of financial guarantees or grants to the Canadian National Railways without the appointment of the Auditor General of Canada at least as a joint auditor of the CNR is not a principle that this House ought to support.

On that occasion I indicated that I intended to deal with the procedural aspects of the amendment but before I could do so the hour for private members' business intervened and, subsequently, the debate on Bill C-186 was unanimously adjourned. This is the first occasion when the bill has been back before the House and therefore, if it is agreeable to the House, this might be an opportune time for me to deal with the procedural aspects of the amendment.

It seems to me, and I appreciate that this was the intention of the hon. member who moved it, that the

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proposed amendment, if adopted, would have the effect of amending clause 15 of the bill which provides for the appointment of auditors. It would, in the words of the proposed amendment, provide for "the appointment of the Auditor General of Canada at least as a joint auditor of the CNR." While the purpose of the amendment is clear, my concern must be whether or not it is procedurally correct.

With great respect to the hon. member who proposed the amendment it seems to me there are two aspects of it which may not pass the test of a reasoned amendment which could be accepted at this point in the proceedings. First, it appears that the proposed amendment does not oppose the principle of the bill. It opposes or adds to the provision of clause 15 by substituting one auditor for another, or by providing that instead of the auditor named in clause 15 acting alone, he would act jointly with the Auditor General of Canada. I cite here as authority, without reading it to the House, Beauchesne's Fourth Edition, citation 393(3).

The second point which gives me some concern, and on which the proposed amendment may fall somewhat short of the practices of the House, is that the purpose the hon. member for Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo is attempting to achieve is the amendment of a detail of the bill which might very well be attempted in the standing committee, or at the report stage of the bill. Again, without reading the citations, may I refer hon. members to May's 17th edition, pages 527 and 528, and Beauchesne's fourth edition, citation 389.

I am not unmindful of the care with which the proposed amendment was drafted but, because of the caution which the Chair must exercise to ensure the procedural acceptability of amendments, and for the reasons I have mentioned, I am of the opinion that the hon. member's proposed amendment cannot be put at this time.

Mr. Charles H. Thomas (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, once again Parliament is being asked to go through its annual exercise of rubber stamping expenditures for the Canadian National Railways and Air Canada. Most of the money has already been spent. In addition, we are being asked to give our approval to substantial loans to both of these companies, and even to guarantee the payment of any losses which the companies might incur beyond the specified amounts.

It is very disturbing to me, and I am sure to many other hon. members, that when introducing the bill the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) saw fit only to catalogue the provisions of the bill without any explanation of government policy in respect of the many criticisms that have been levelled at the CNR and Air Canada in the past year. Surely, someone on the government side could tell the House if the government is planning to investigate the growing public criticism of both the CN and Air Canada. Surely, someone could tell us whether the government agrees with the CN policy of passenger line abandonment, and more particularly the obvious intention of CN to abandon all those lines which it categorizes as unprofitable. Why should the profit aspect be the sole determining factor of whether or not a line