

when we are rising to discuss Bill C-19, an act to amend or repeal certain statutes to enable restraint of government expenditures, that on the same day we hear an announcement by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Andras) that there is to be established a royal commission of inquiry on financial organization and accountability in the Government of Canada. It seems to me that this could not be more ironic, nor could it be more appropriate.

It seems to me that in discussing this bill one should, if possible, be brief, but there are a few things which simply must be said and, coming from the eastern part of this country, it seems to me that before getting into a detailed discussion on the bill it would be appropriate to call it ten o'clock.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): That is the best speech you have ever made.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed that we call it ten o'clock?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

TRANSPORT—REQUEST FOR ACTION TO ENABLE SOME COMMUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN RAILWAY RELOCATION PROGRAM

Mr. Alex B. Patterson (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, on November 8 I asked a question of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) as follows:

As the cost-sharing formula in the railway relocation legislation makes it impossible for many towns and communities to participate in the program, will the minister consider the introduction of amendments which will make it possible for less affluent communities to proceed with plans to remove serious inconveniences and eliminate safety hazards occasioned by the presence of railway lines in heavily populated areas?

This brings to our attention the matter of relocation of railway lines in populated areas across the country, and as we check back we find that the history of this particular legislation is rather long and, to say the least, interesting. It has been a long period of promises by the government and then long delays in the fulfillment of those promises.

I call attention to the *Debates* of March 25, 1974, when I asked the following question:

Mr. Speaker, may I direct my question to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. As in the last session on at least five occasions the government was asked about its impending plans for the introduction of railway relocation legislation, as the Speech from the Throne said that something would be done in that connection and, further, in view of the present uncertainty this question is

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causing right across Canada, including in my own areas of Chilliwack and Abbotsford, can the minister state today when the government will bring forward legislation to deal with this important matter?

The reply of the then minister of state for urban affairs, now the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) was as follows:

... I have met with the Mayor of Chilliwack and I know he has a great interest in railway relocation proposals in that community. My colleague, the Minister of Transport, and I hope to be able to make an announcement in this regard very shortly.

That goes back a considerable length of time, but later on I took part in the debates in the House on April 29, 1974, and I raised this question about the availability of funds for the relocation of railways in smaller urban areas across the nation. I voiced the fear that it was impossible that all the funds that had been locked into this program could conceivably be allocated to the larger areas where they were probably better able to raise their apportionment to carry out this work.

● (2200)

I raised this question with the former minister of state for urban affairs on April 29, 1974, and at page 1838 of *Hansard* he replied:

... it would cover the cities of Chilliwack and Abbotsford to which the hon. member referred in that, from one purpose of the definition, it is any municipality with a population of 1,000 or more people having the legal status of a city, town or village. So there is no question that the centres within the hon. member's riding would be covered by the Statistics Canada definition.

As this program got under way we found that these two communities to which I have alluded were unable to meet the requirements of the cost formula because they were small urban areas and the formula was such that they were not able to have the financial resources to pay their share of the relocation program.

I should like to call attention to a letter from the city of Chilliwack to Senator Ray Perrault dated February 11, 1976. There was a great deal of discussion and many communications at the time to try to get some further action. The letter reads:

Dear Sir:

At a recent meeting of the council of Chilliwack city and Chilliwack township, a resolution was unanimously passed directing that both councils point out once again the extreme hazards, inconvenience and depreciating effect caused by the C.N. Railway's mainline bisecting this community.

This council has already made its feelings on this matter known to both the federal and provincial governments. It is impossible for this community to find the vast sums necessary to relocate the line despite announced federal financial assistance programs.

Then the letter went on:

What is needed and what is being increasingly demanded by the citizens of this community is bold, dynamic and imaginative action by the federal government to erase the threat to their well-being.

There is a letter from the mayor of the township as well. It took a long time to get the program in place, Mr. Speaker, so why not make it of optimum benefit to all the areas requiring help? When I asked this question the other day the minister responded but I was not sure what he meant by the last part of the reply so I put a supplementary question as follows: