

Division

this matter was discussed. First of all, the great proponent at that time of an increase in the number of directors was none other than the deskmate of the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate, the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Benidickson). We all know that the committee unanimously recommended that the government should bring in such a bill which is now called insignificant, unimportant and so on by hon. members across the floor. Among those members who voted for this recommendation in that committee were the hon. member for Port Arthur, the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River, the hon. member for Lapointe, the hon. member for Burin-Burgeo and the hon. member for Fort William.

I do not agree with the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate that this bill does not mean anything. He got up to speak about 20 times on the bill. I would not say that he has made three major speeches—

Mr. Pickersgill: Nor would I.

Mr. Balcer:—but he has certainly made three lengthy speeches in which he has said that this measure is unimportant and so on. I must admit that I am somewhat at a loss in trying to understand his attitude as to the importance of various matters that are brought before the house. Only last week we brought forward a matter of such importance as a brand new shipping policy that will provide a lot of work for Canadians but we have not heard from him about it. Yet he finds the time to make three speeches on this bill which he calls unimportant and insignificant.

I will not pretend that the fact that we are increasing the number of directors of the C.N.R. will settle all the problems of the railway. Of course not. But I must say that I certainly fail to find any sense in the argument of the hon. member for Laurier when he says that we should not take this step because there is unemployment in Canada and because the C.N.R. has a deficit. I think precisely the opposite view should move the house to support the bill, because the C.N.R. is extremely important business. It has an operating revenue of about \$700 million, and the management has to make tremendously important policy decisions which mean a lot to the future of this national railway. I think that to strengthen the board with good Canadians who will have at heart the welfare and improvement of our national railway is a move in the right direction.

As I said in my opening remarks on the bill, if one looks at the United States railways one will see that the largest and most important ones, which are all smaller than the C.N.R., have boards of directors with memberships ranging between 15 and 25, and

our own Canadian Pacific Railway has 24 directors. An argument was made by the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River both in the house and in the committee as to the importance of an organization like the C.N.R. having as directors good businessmen who will bring traffic to the line and who will bring to the board as directors their experience as successful Canadians in their various fields of endeavour. I think this is all to the good. In my view this move will really help the C.N.R. and it will be money well spent.

I know my hon. friends across the floor during this debate have taken an attitude that is not very commendable in saying that because these people are going to be paid, this is money wasted when there is unemployment at the present time and some Canadians are suffering. I sincerely believe that this is no argument at all, because what we are recommending is the strengthening of one of the largest enterprises of the Canadian government.

Canadian National Railways is a tremendous public undertaking. The government has the responsibility for this railway. It must see that the railway is well managed and that management has the proper support and the tools with which it can do a good job. By doing what we are doing today I think we are helping the C.N.R. We will bring to the board of directors great Canadians. When we look at the people who have served on the board in the past I think we can have confidence that we will have great Canadians as directors who will bring to the C.N.R. their vast experience, their Canadianism and the will to render a great service to the Canadian public.

The house divided on the motion (Mr. Balcer) which was agreed to on the following division:

YEAS

Messrs:

Aitken, Miss	Cathers
Allard	Chambers
Anderson	Charlton
Argue	Chown
Balcer	Churchill
Barrington	Clancy
Baskin	Comtois
Beech	Cooper
Bell (Carleton)	Creaghan
Best	Crouse
Brassard (Chicoutimi)	Danforth
Browne (St. John's West)	Doucett
Browne (Vancouver-Kingsway)	Dubois
Brunsdien	English
Cadieu	Fairclough, Mrs.
Campbell	Fairfield
(Lambton-Kent)	Fane
Campbell (Stormont)	Fisher
Cardiff	Flemming (Royal)
	Forbes