

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

question? It was a very interesting question and I am sure it deserves an answer.

**Mr. Nugent:** It is an interesting and important question, Mr. Chairman, and probably the minister would like to think it over overnight. It is ten o'clock.

**Mr. McIlraith:** Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether the committee would be willing to attempt to finish this clause and maybe another clause—

**Some hon. Members:** No.

**Mr. Nugent:** No.

**The Chairman:** Order. There is no possibility of even considering it; the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona has called it ten o'clock.

Progress reported.

#### PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the house under provisional standing order 39A deemed to have been moved.

#### TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY—NOVA SCOTIA— REPORTED KICKBACKS BY TRUCK OPERATORS

**Mr. Gerald A. Regan (Halifax):** Mr. Speaker, my question concerned the disturbing report in yesterday's *Chronicle-Herald* that three men had testified under oath before the public accounts committee of the province of Nova Scotia legislature that they had been required to kick back to certain contact men a portion of the money that their trucks earned in highway construction work on the trans-Canada highway in Pictou county; that they had to do this as a condition of having their trucks work on the project.

The testimony of these three men suggests that there have been very highly irregular practices of the meanest sort in the administration of a shared cost program. The federal government is paying 90 per cent of the cost of the trans-Canada highway projects in Nova Scotia, and therefore this parliament must concern itself with the investigation being carried on in the public accounts committee in the Nova Scotia legislature and being spearheaded by Peter Nicholson, the leader of the opposition. It is true that contracts are let by the provincial government and the expenditures are administered by the provincial government. It is my understanding, however, that in these shared cost programs the basis of agreement between the federal

government and the province is to the effect that patronage practices shall not be used and that all citizens shall have an equal opportunity to obtain employment in the construction work.

Last year we heard reports from Nova Scotia that shared cost programs were being endangered by premature announcements of projects by one or other of the governments, and it was established that joint announcements should occur on all projects. This present situation which provides evidence of a type of patronage practice that one would have expected to have disappeared from this country many years ago, appears to me to constitute a much greater threat to the system of shared cost programs. To require hard working truckers to pay part of their meagre income with which they must support their families to a political party or its agents is the most despicable practice of which I have ever heard. If as the evidence suggests this has been happening, I would ask the Minister of Public Works to consult with the Minister of Labour as to the desirability of creating a stipulation in all shared cost programs with the provinces that all hiring done by construction companies on the project, both of labour and of trucks, shall be done through the national employment service. Such a provision would bar the possibility of any government using these shared cost programs as a corrupt source of party funds.

The investigation is continuing before the Nova Scotia public accounts committee, and I would be quick to admit that it would be premature for the federal government to take action before these hearings are concluded, even though the testimony that these payments were made has already been given. It may be that a judicial inquiry will be the outcome of these hearings. If, however, no inquiry is ordered by the provincial government, then the federal government has a responsibility to approach the government of Nova Scotia to suggest a judicial commission to investigate the administration of joint cost programs in that province. This is because of the fact that we have much to come in the future. We have commitments to further expenditure on trans-Canada highway development in Nova Scotia. There are developments through the Atlantic development board of a joint cost sharing nature, and others, and for that reason it is quite important.

I would ask that the Minister of Public Works, in the event I have mentioned, contact the premier of Nova Scotia and attempt