

Railway Act

the minister what he has received from Dr. Bandeen in exchange for that.

We would be interested in receiving answers to questions regarding the entire situation with respect to road beds and grades over which Canadian National runs its stock. What will be done to upgrade the roadbeds and grades? What will be done about the bottlenecks which cause congestion in the lower mainland of British Columbia? What will be done about electrification? Canadian National Railways will have all kinds of capital for investment. What undertaking has the Minister of Transport received from the CNR in these areas? What will be done about rail and ferry passenger service in Atlantic Canada? Essentially there are five systems. The Minister of Transport has indicated that four of those systems will be abandoned, and yet the CNR comes forward and requests \$808 million in debt relief. What will be done about the ferry system of Atlantic Canada? The Minister of Transport is talking out of both sides of his mouth. The other day he told me in the House that his departmental officials had not gone to Europe to find new construction for a ferry to replace the one in use; they had gone to Europe attempting to find one to lease. Balderdash and hogwash! They are over there looking for someone to construct a ferry at a time when our Canadian shipyards are underutilized and when there is an excess capacity which should be used! Of course a ferry cannot be built in a year, but if they do not order it this year, they will not have it for four years. They will still be going offshore to look. They know what the requirements will be well into the 1980s, but they have not canvassed Canadian shipyards where there is a capacity and a willingness to build.

● (2142)

What is Canadian National going to do with all this capital? What is the government going to do about rate increase for containers out of Halifax to central Canada? People in Atlantic Canada are very bitter when they see thousands of millions being poured into the central economy. We are criticized because we have to transfer the natural wealth of the richer provinces to Atlantic Canada. The government says it believes in equalization but, as I mentioned earlier, within 30 or 60 days a large percentage of every \$1 million sent to us is back in Quebec. That is by design. Hon. members can ask the drafters of the original DREE policy. They were instructed to write it that way. They play games. Will \$808 million not cost anybody anything?

Whatever happened to the "at and east" rates? That government proposal would have cost thousands of jobs at the lakehead, on farm lands and in Atlantic Canada. Processors, millers and shippers would have been affected.

Mr. Benjamin: The Atlantic premiers agreed with it.

Mr. Forrestall: Well, they were sucked in by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang). We are concerned. We want solutions to these problems.

The hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) says we are quite prepared to let this bill go to the committee. I do

not think it should until every member on this side of the House has expressed his concern to the minister about the absence of any meaningful assurance that this new accounting system is going to work and an acknowledgement that, if in fact it does work, the funding available for capital expansion and improvement will be spent on road bed improvement, grade improvement, bottleneck problems in the lower mainland of B.C., the coal resources in the northern region of Alberta, and rail access to the port at Prince Rupert.

One is hard pressed to go more than 200 or 300 miles without finding a major requirement for capital expansion in the system and facilities of CN. There are signalling and switching requirements, control of box cars is needed and new rolling stock and reefer cars are needed. Cars are needed to move shakes, potatoes and fish. We need a new dock warehouse facility at the port of Saint John. What assurances did the Minister of Transport get out of Dr. Bandeen and Canadian National with respect to these requirements? Where are those assurances, and when are we going to hear about them? This is a form of contempt, disregard and arrogance on the part of a government which has been in power so long that it does not know the difference and does not care.

An hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Forrestall: That hon. member will be put on the bench shortly. Perhaps he will go to the Senate or somewhere else; either that or we will build a tunnel so that we can visit him.

I hope hon. members on all sides of the House will raise matters regarding the assurances of which I spoke. There is a need, and I hope hon. members will point out clearly alternative policies to be followed. I hope hon. members will extract from the government what CN will do with the capital which is going to be available. I hope we can get from the minister or some other hon. member opposite an assurance with respect to our shipyards. Unless these things are done, skepticism and cynicism will continue with respect to CN and its role in the development of the national economy. We believe that transportation is a tool of economic development. We believe it is a useful, meaningful and needed tool in the development of the economies of regions of disparity. Without that tool Atlantic Canada and the north will not survive.

A change of attitude on the part of Canadian National is needed, and I hope that this \$808 million will go a long way toward improving the attitude of CN toward this chamber, the regions of this country which rely totally and completely on transportation and toward the people of this country whose economic well being depends so much upon the capacity of CN to service, in an efficient and economic way, not only the financial requirements of this country but also the hopes and aspirations of the people who live in it.

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to have an opportunity to speak in this hallowed chamber on the subject of the CNR. It is a subject which is of great importance to the province from which I come. I am glad to see that the minister responsible for small business, or