

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 11, 1966

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the house that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer certificates of the election and return of two members, namely:

Don Jamieson, Esquire, for the electoral district of Burin-Burgeo; and

Andrew Chatwood, Esquire, for the electoral district of Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador.

NEW MEMBERS INTRODUCED

Don Jamieson, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Burin-Burgeo, introduced by Right Hon. L. B. Pearson and Hon. J. W. Pickersgill.

Andrew Chatwood, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador, introduced by Right Hon. L. B. Pearson and Hon. J. W. Pickersgill.

● (2:40 p.m.)

TRANSPORT

DORION, QUE.—INVESTIGATION INTO LEVEL CROSSING ACCIDENT

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, it is because of a very sad occasion that I am obliged to rise in the house today. The Thanksgiving week end for all of us all over Canada was marred by the terrible accident at Dorion which took the lives of 19 young people and caused injury to 24 others, some of whom are in very grave condition.

This is but one of unfortunately too many of these accidents on the roads and at level crossings. I should like to tell the house that both the Canadian National Railways and the Board of Transport Commissioners have been conducting the most intensive investigations from the moment of the news of the accident. Every effort that it is possible to take will be taken to find out what was the real cause, and if it is found to be a situation that can be corrected the necessary corrective action will be taken, and taken without delay.

23033—538

I feel sure, sir, that I express your sentiments and the sentiments of every member of the house when I express to the families of all those who lost their lives or who may have been crippled the deep sympathy of the house, which I believe is shared throughout the country.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, with the words of the Minister of Transport there will be entire agreement on the part of hon. members of the house and the people of the country as a whole. The terrible tragedy which struck Dorion evokes a maximum of sympathy in the hearts and souls of all Canadians.

What will be done, what action should be taken to guard against another repetition of a tragedy now twice repeated within a period of some two or three years? The Kiwanis club of Lake of Two Mountains communicated with me in these words:

Dorion bus train tragedy due to highly unsatisfactory level crossing conditions generally in this area. Corrective action required now. Commission investigation later.

We have the assurance of the minister that everything is being done by the railway company and the Board of Transport Commissioners fully to investigate this matter. This is part of the larger tragedy of week end slaughter of Canadians on our highways and is something that challenges—yes, demands—that in the spirit of unity between federal and provincial governments we recognize the need to prevent the terrible wastage of life which is taking place. Indeed, as compared to the casualties suffered by the United States forces in Viet Nam our week end highway casualties are often larger.

The sympathy of all Canadians is extended to the parents and families of those young people who died after an hour of happiness which turned into tragedy.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the members of the New Democratic Party wish to associate themselves with the expressions of regret and sympathy already put forward by the Minister of Transport and the right hon. Leader of the Official Opposition. We too wish to extend our condolences to the families of those who suffered such a tragic loss at the level crossing at Dorion.