

*Canadian National Railways*

National Railways passenger service in Newfoundland and the appointment of Jack Pickersgill to the Canadian Transport Commission at a salary of \$40,000. I contend that there is a high degree of correlation between the abandonment of the rail passenger service and the salary of one of the highest paid civil servants in North America.

I should like to point out two or three reasons for my rising to speak here today on this resolution. I feel the government is increasing the geographical malnutrition that is being suffered by the people of the Atlantic region. The general principle of having the rail passenger service abandoned in Newfoundland is to me sufficient to take exception to, in the circumstances. The idea would seem to be that if there is something to be experimented with it should be tried on the east coast. Only this morning we sat in this chamber and heard the Minister of Transport say that he was awaiting some briefs from the people of the Atlantic region because the government of Canada was not as aware of many of the problems of the Atlantic region as are the people down in that region. I hope the minister did not mean to imply that the government of Canada is not as sensitive to the needs and problems of the area as it is to those of other parts of Canada. I am sure he did not mean that.

I believe it would be to the benefit of both the minister and the government of Canada if the minister were here today to hear some of the arguments presented by the members of this house in an attempt to enlighten the people of Canada and the members of the house concerning some of the problems that are faced by the people in the Atlantic region. We have certain problems and we know that the governments and the people in these areas perhaps have more awareness of them. Therefore, I think the sentiments of the people of Newfoundland should be borne in mind when decisions of the nature of the decision in respect of the C.N.R. are taken. Briefs have been presented, people have testified. People have demonstrated throughout the whole of Newfoundland in protest against the abandonment of the C.N.R. To my knowledge there has not been one dissenting voice in the whole of Newfoundland to our stand that the C.N.R. should retain the rail passenger service. We have not heard from the person who used to be a great premier of Newfoundland; we have not heard from him at all. There must be something radically wrong when an agreement which obviously has been made is not brought to the attention of the house.

[Mr. Lundrigan.]

The economy of Newfoundland will suffer because of the abandonment of the C.N.R. The rail passenger service not only stimulates the economy but, especially if it were upgraded, would greatly boost the economy through a tremendous increase in tourist and trade development. There in the community of Bishop Falls, in my district with 2,000 people, this is the only source of income. This community will disappear off the face of Newfoundland and off the map unless the C.N.R. assumes its responsibility and takes issue with this particular stand. It is not the C.N.R., perhaps, but rather the government of Canada that would have to take such a stand.

As my friend, the hon. member for Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador mentioned, there obviously is some kind of a scheme between the "Joe" and the "Jack" of Newfoundland. There is obviously some kind of agreement of which the Canadian people are not aware. Is it not amazing that just at the time when Jack Pickersgill is getting his \$40,000 we are to lose our rail passenger service? It would seem to me that there is no reason for this other than to try to justify the "in-pocket", the income, of Jack Pickersgill. If we are to create this kind of bureaucracy, then it becomes necessary to curtail services somewhere in Canada and it would appear the thinking is that the best place to do this is on the Atlantic coast. There obviously is something wrong.

Pressure has been put on the premier of Newfoundland, who hung a black flag from the confederation building not too many years ago when an issue was at stake. Then he came to Ottawa. Our friend Mr. Gwyn, now the executive assistant to the Postmaster General, will remember the conversation he had with the premier when Joe Smallwood travelled to Ottawa. Black flags were flown and the citizens of Newfoundland wore black at that time. But we have not heard one word from the premier of Newfoundland about this present kind of action. Also we still see the gracious person proceeding through the halls of this House of Commons sporting his \$40,000; but we do not hear a single word from him about the great injustice.

• (4:00 p.m.)

All hon. members who have been here for some years are aware of what sometimes happens in politics, and that political plans sometimes result in making decisions which affect the economies of areas. I contend that there has been one great scheme that we do not know much about, although we can suspect