

Adjournment Debate

The answer to the first part of the Member's question is very simple. Mr. Jaffe appears to have exercised no influence whatsoever with respect to the prosecution of those kidnapping charges against his bounty hunters. In the first place that prosecution, as I have already indicated, is being conducted by and under the authority of the Attorney General for Ontario.

Mr. Wenman: Stop skating.

Mr. MacBain: Second, that prosecution is before the courts at this very moment. I can say nothing further which will assist the Member in understanding what Jaffe's Florida lawyer had in mind when he wrote the letter the Member referred to. As far as can be ascertained, Jaffe had and has no influence of the sort the Member refers to, at least with federal officials.

Next, the Member suggests that officials of the Canadian Government are protecting or attempting to protect Mr. Jaffe from due process of United States laws. Such a suggestion is a complete misconstruction of everything that the Government of Canada has done in the Jaffe case. Jaffe was abducted from Canada contrary to Canadian law and contrary to the express provisions of the extradition treaty between Canada and the United States. This treaty is a part of the United States law. Canada has consistently argued that Jaffe's seizure was in direct breach of international and domestic United States law. Had the extradition of Sidney Jaffe been properly requested, and had the courts committed him for extradition, he would have been surrendered in the normal course to be dealt with according to due process under United States law.

● (1820)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Member's time has expired.

CROWN CORPORATIONS—NORTHERN TRANSPORTATION
COMPANY LTD.—REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION OF
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Mr. Stan Schellenberger (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, on December 15, I rose in the House to ask the Minister of Transport (Mr. Axworthy) a question regarding the management, safety and accounting practices of Northern Transportation Company Ltd. and about concerns that a conflict of interest existed because employees and managers of NTCL are also directors and shareholders in a competing company in marine transportation in the North. Since then I have not received a direct answer from the Minister, although he indicated at the time that he would look into the matter.

I have furnished the Minister with the required information he needs to begin his investigation into the operations of NTCL. As well, I have placed a number of questions on the Order Paper respecting my concerns in regard to this public company.

To assist the Minister, I would like to expand somewhat on my earlier questions. First, regarding management practices, there is sufficient evidence that management is involved in questionable contract arrangements with various companies,

for example, a 400,000-tonne tug in Tuktoyaktuk for which there does not seem to be any need. NTCL is stopping its operations in the Athabasca region, yet there is business there. In the Churchill operation, a number of items have been bought which have questionable value or use in that area. As well, the company's profits have decreased from about \$8 million in previous years to about \$1.4 million in the most recent year.

Contractual arrangements have been made involving a northern welding company in Hay River. At the same time as NTCL lays off its welders for the season, within a matter of weeks it is hiring welders through a private company in the area. The welders of NTCL are very concerned about this.

Also, it would be good if the Minister would explain to the House why NTCL has failed to obtain a multi-million dollar contract in recent years and why, after it had failed, Arctic Transport Ltd. was called in by the company and awarded a contract to complete the contract because there was insufficient material for the successful bidder to finish it. At a time profits are decreasing to the company it would seem to me it should be an active bidder for work.

NTCL has a contract with the United States air force to deliver fuel and other goods for operations in the North, particularly to the Pine Tree line, and to other areas as well. It has a contract to operate a floating drydock owned by the United States air force, referred to as ARD-31.

Could the Minister verify that NTCL is operating ARD-31 for its own business and other purposes which are prohibited directly by the contract it has signed? Would the Minister ask for a copy of the contract and table the information in the House so that I and others could use it? Would the Minister check if this drydock is also being openly offered by NTCL to companies for service this year?

In terms of safety, the Minister is now aware of the numerous hazards which exist relating to fuel handling, fuel shipping and cargo handling on the Mackenzie River and the Beaufort Sea. The most pressing concern relates to the unsafe practice of shipping dead cargo on fuel barges and operating combustion engine vehicles on barge decks where explosive fuel containers are still on the below deck. Certainly these practices are not in accordance with Coast Guard regulations. In fact, insurance companies are unwilling to ensure fuel barges which are used to haul dead cargo, yet NTCL persists in these practices. I am concerned that if these proper safety procedures and practices are not respected, there may be a serious accident in the North.

These cargo-laden fuel barges travel to many communities in the North. They are docked and used as floating piers for other barges, which greatly increases the potential for serious consequences such as an explosion or a major fire. That is why it is important to investigate these safety practices.

● (1825)

I would also ask that there be an investigation as to whether proper equipment and training is available to employees who are operating in these areas and on these barges. It is impor-