

Adjournment Debate

railroad in question so that we could negotiate in good faith or intelligently with respect to retaining or reducing the increases in the rate structure being proposed.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): There was the audited report.

Mr. McCain: The audited report did not have it, although there must be a breakdown in there somewhere. But the parliamentary secretary should not quarrel. The answer I received came from the minister. He is responsible for the answer to question No. 2549 which I placed on the order paper on July 20, 1973. The answer reached my office on October 16, 1973, and was that "neither railway compiles profit or loss statements on a regional basis." But, Mr. Speaker, when a railroad wants to abandon a line it has facts and figures to show that the line does not pay. It has facts to show it loses so much and it itemizes the loss. And when it wants to remove passenger service on a particular line it itemizes the loss. Somewhere the CNR has zone, regional and provincial figures, and I believe we should get them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: This seems a convenient time to call it ten o'clock.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Bell: In asking the House leader the business for tomorrow, may I compliment the government on having eight ministers here for the entire evening. The reason for such activity completely escapes us.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I want to tell my hon. friend that the reason eight ministers are here tonight is to meet the formidable new House leader for the Conservative Party.

Tomorrow we will continue with this item, followed by the Customs Act.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order No. 40 deemed to have been moved.

PUBLIC SERVICE—REGIONAL PAY INEQUITIES—REASONS FOR NOT APPLYING SAME PRINCIPLE TO MEMBERS

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I asked the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) whether, in view of his attitude toward wage parity or equity for federal public servants, he was going to be consistent and use similar reasoning for paying members of parliament. The best answer he could give me was that members of parliament are not part of a collective bargaining process, as if we did not know that. And if we were, Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not believe that many

[Mr. McCain.]

of us would want the President of the Treasury Board as our spokesman because, with all deference, his antediluvian attitude in some matters causes me to wonder whether some day he will be dragged, kicking and screaming, into the twentieth century.

● (2200)

We are dealing tonight with thousands of nurses under federal jurisdiction who are aggrieved by the arbitral award brought forward by the public service arbitration tribunal. As a result, they are making their feelings known across the nation this evening and are manifesting those feelings in various ways. In Halifax, at the Camp Hill hospital, the operating room and psychiatric ward are affected. Some wards are doubled up and in many cases patients have been sent home. Similar conditions prevail in Whitehorse, at the Shaughnessy hospital in Vancouver, Deer Lodge in Winnipeg, in Edmonton, and so on across the nation.

In addition, to underline the seriousness of the situation, public health nurses are joining the protest and according to my information are booking in sick in places such as Prince Albert, Edmonton, Calgary, Halifax and Sydney, Nova Scotia, and reports are starting to come in from registered nurses. This government now has a situation on its hands that is affecting the care of veterans. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, what class of people in this nation is more deserving of respect, of gratitude and of the highest standards of hospital care and treatment than veterans?

The hon. members for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. McKenzie), Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), and Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) have been bringing the situation before the House, so the government cannot say it did not have warning. In the past, the hon. members for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forre-stall), Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave), and St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) have all consistently prodded this government about its attitude toward regional wage parity. On occasion I have asked the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Jamieson) about it, as has the hon. member for St. John's East. This government has been given plenty of reminders about its inequitable policies.

Let us consider a typical statement of government policy in this regard. I should like to read a document that is quite literally on its way to many members of parliament. It is a petition put out by the nurses who in their opinion are aggrieved by government policy. It reads:

In view of the outcome of the recent federal nurses arbitration tribunal in which Treasury Board originally tried to suppress information of vital concern to the nurses and then failed to implement its own policy as stated by the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board on April 17, 1972, and by the President of the Treasury Board on October 12, 1971 . . .

The nurses as citizens and public servants feel it is their responsibility to submit a vote of non-confidence in the Liberal government.

Unfortunately, they can only do this symbolically, but it gives some indication of the depth of their feelings about the way they have been treated. There are sections of the Public Service Staff Relations Act which permit the government to modify its policies with regard to the way nurses are presently treated. Nurses would like to see