

ing to the bill before us. The hon. member talked about almost everything that is going on in Newfoundland. He spoke about his concern about meetings which might be held in the weeks to come. He made some irresponsible remarks about the minister, and followed the usual pattern of irresponsibility we have witnessed over the past few years with regard to transportation and with regard to practically everything else.

The homework and dedication which should be applied in order to make a concrete contribution to the daily workings of this House are sadly lacking. The previous speaker might be well advised to spend a little more time in the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications. If he did that, he would serve his constituents and his province better than he has done this afternoon. The hon. member spent 30 or 40 minutes of the time of this House speaking about something about which he really knew very little. Anyone listening to his remarks would be convinced he had not prepared himself with respect to Bill C-17 or any other aspect of transportation as it relates to the administration of transportation corporations.

Last year the committee travelled to the Atlantic provinces, and I was struck by the presentation made in Saint John, New Brunswick, by the administrators of the port commission there. The hon. member would have been well advised to have spent some time with his people to help them prepare their submission. As I recall it, they spent half an hour criticizing, but they failed to put the real facts on the table and to present any logical and reasonable suggestions.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point or order. I do not want to interrupt the hon. gentleman, but I was at that hearing, and no submission was made by the St. John's, Newfoundland, port authority. The only submission which had anything to do with the port was from the CN dockyard. It made an excellent submission on the need for a syncro-lift. The hon. gentleman may have been there in person, but his head was somewhere else.

Mr. Harquail: The remarks of the hon. member in his intervention this afternoon showed clearly which heads are empty. I was referring to the group the hon. member just identified, the people involved with the dockyard. The hon. member would have better spent his time helping them prepare recommendations which could have been considered. An excellent opportunity was missed. By comparison, other submissions we received at Halifax and at Saint John put the facts on the table for our consideration. As a result, we were able to act in a positive way.

It is always interesting to hear from a former member of the former Newfoundland Liberal government. He has made a complete about-face in terms of his basic philosophy and of statements he has made in the past. The hon. member held different positions and different portfolios in that provincial Liberal government. However, we witness that all the time. We witness it in Nova Scotia, which enjoys the benefits of substantial amounts of federal funds not only in the transportation field but in other fields as well.

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The amount of DREE money going to the Atlantic provinces and the positive results of that have been mentioned. However, hon. members opposite are not interested in positive things, good administration or responsible government. They are interested only in picking up leads from the press and coming here with ill-conceived and poorly prepared presentations. They think somewhere along the line they might succeed in hoodwinking the average citizen. They hope Canadians will believe them. They never refer to the positive, dynamic administration of, for example, Air Canada and Dr. Bandeen.

Mr. Paproski: What about the last ten years?

Mr. Harquail: We hear much discussion and criticism about deficits, and when the minister, the cabinet or other responsible corporate officials succeed, people have very short memories.

Mr. Paproski: We give credit where credit is due.

Mr. Harquail: I am glad that the hon. member for Edmonton Centre (Mr. Paproski) is prepared to state on behalf of his party that it is prepared to give credit where credit is due. I am encouraged by that. I am encouraged to note that he is taking this position, and when he says that I assume he speaks for all members of his party. This is an encouraging development of a kind I have not witnessed here before. If he is prepared to make that statement, then I am certainly pleased to know this is the position of his party.

● (1702)

In terms of all the consultants and experts who have considered transportation matters, particularly in eastern Canada and the Atlantic area, there is no doubt about the importance of transportation. There can be no doubt about the vital importance of the co-operation that must take place among the Council of Maritime Premiers, the provincial governments of the Atlantic area and the federal government. They must work in concert to develop policies that will bring forth actions and results to provide us with necessary transportation facilities so that we can improve the economic situation in the Atlantic provinces.

We must not forget the important aspects I raised earlier before the committee regarding improvements to air passenger service linking the four Atlantic provinces, as well as the necessity for the continuation of a high speed modern rail passenger service between Halifax and Montreal. These are matters we have had an opportunity to discuss in the committee.

I am pleased that officials of the CN have indicated, through Dr. Bandeen and the new president of VIA, Mr. Roberts, in a positive response, that it is their intention to continue with policy directions to assure Canadians in the four Atlantic provinces that the type of transportation facilities required will be introduced as a result of the substantially large amount of federal money being directed into VIA for upgrading the road bed and equipment in general, and in this