

Again for the record I would like to bring to the attention of the minister subsection (1) of section 64 of the National Transportation Act, which provides:

The Governor in Council may at any time, in his discretion, either upon petition of any party, person or company interested, or of his own motion, and without any petition or application, vary or rescind any order, decision, rule or regulation of the commission, whether such order or decision is made inter partes or otherwise, and whether such regulation is general or limited in its scope and application; and any order that the Governor in Council may make with respect thereto is binding upon the commission and upon all parties.

So the minister, as a federal cabinet minister, together with his colleagues and the Governor in Council, and so on, have the final decision.

Also for the record I bring once more to the attention of the minister, as I have in the past, section 50 of the National Transportation Act, a very short section, which provides as follows:

The Governor in Council may at any time refer to the Commission for a report, or other action, any question, matter or thing arising, or required to be done, under the Railway Act, or the Special Act, or any other Act of the Parliament of Canada, and the Commission shall without delay comply with the requirements of such reference.

The minister has considerable authority at the present time, but is curiously reluctant to use it.

In conclusion I say to the government, through you, Mr. Speaker: give us in this House some leadership in coping with our transportation problems, and negotiate some new tariff agreements or other agreements to protect those parts of the country that are being crippled and held to ransom by the present outmoded transportation policy.

Mr. Cliff McIsaac (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I regret that time does not permit me to answer adequately all of the charges and points raised by the hon. member for Central Nova (Mr. MacKay) but I will try to stick to the main point that he made in his earlier question. The answer very simply, I suppose, is yes, transportation will be used as an instrument in support of regional economic and social development.

I am sure that if the hon. member would think for a moment or two of some of the legislation now in effect in the maritime provinces, he will agree that the fact is that the government has been doing just that for some time. I can cite the Maritime Freight Rates Act, the Atlantic Freight Rates Assistance Act, through which the government has contributed over \$70 million in the past three years alone to subsidize not only those who ship via rail but also those who use truckers to move goods at reasonable rates within the Atlantic region, and to allow Atlantic region shippers to compete in the central Canada market. That has been going on, as I say, for some time.

It is my information that only last April the government increased both truck and rail subsidies paid under this legislation, in some cases up to 50 per cent, on a range of agricultural, manufactured and processed products. In addition, the Ministry of Transport and the Department of Regional Economic Expansion have spent hundreds of millions of dollars to build ports, airport and highway facilities to help develop not only the Atlantic region about which the hon. member is rightly concerned but other parts of Canada as well.

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The fact that the Atlantic region is now experiencing a net in-migration population pattern attests, I think, to the success of the programs of DREE and the Ministry of Transport. This is not to say that the department is yet satisfied as such. As we develop our new policy we are in constant communication with all the ministers from the Atlantic provinces, as well as the ministers from the western provinces, Ontario and Quebec, to try to get a clear and concise understanding of their priorities so they can hopefully be considered and incorporated as part of our over-all transportation planning. The Atlantic provinces are making a significant contribution in this respect, as indeed are other ministers from various parts of Canada. It is certainly the intention of the government to use transportation to ensure the continued development of a strong and viable Atlantic region.

As far as the role of DREE in this area is concerned, the two departments have worked closely together in the past and I can assure the House they will continue to do so in the future.

In closing, very briefly I can only repeat what my minister, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand), told ministers responsible for transportation in Halifax a couple of weeks ago, namely, that if any industries there can show the government that they are in serious jeopardy as a result of freight rate increases, then we will find some way of specifically helping those particular industries.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—PROPOSED COMMITTEE STUDY OF CIDA OPERATIONS

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, what is wrong with the Canadian International Development Agency? That is the question increasing numbers of Canadians are asking in the light of at least 15 newspaper articles in the last month that have been critical of CIDA's operations. The current series in the *Ottawa Journal* raises questions that demand answers if the credibility of Canada's international assistance is not to be jeopardized.

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By citing examples of misdirected aid, of rushing to spend \$117 million to protect next year's budget, of low staff morale because of maladroitness management practices, the *Journal* series casts doubt on the very integrity of CIDA. At the very least it makes us doubt that Canadians are getting good value for the nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars budgeted for CIDA.

In the Commons today I sought a special parliamentary review of CIDA to provide us with the answers we must have at this critical moment in the world. Others in my party have also sought a special inquiry, but the government responds by saying that we can ask questions about CIDA when next year's estimates are being considered by the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence.

That is not good enough, Mr. Speaker. The situation is too serious to hand it over to routine proceedings that are totally inadequate to the review necessary. Let me state emphatically that it is not a witchhunt I am proposing. I speak as a friend, not an enemy of CIDA's. It is precisely