

Newfoundland

\$50 million. The regular departmental expenditures for post offices, customs, administration of family allowances, trade and commerce and other governmental activities are included in those figures. I am unable to give my hon. friend any detailed information now; but as I indicated yesterday, detailed supplementary estimates, setting out what is expected will be required for the provision of dominion government services in Newfoundland, will be tabled probably on or about March 31.

Mr. MacNicol: I want to make an observation arising out of the remarks made by the Minister of Transport. I do not do so by way of criticism, because I feel that the Newfoundland railway must be accepted as it is. Acting through the minister's department, which will be directing the railway company that operates the road for Canada, our duty will be to make an accurate survey, as speedily as possible, of what must be done on the road from St. John's to Port aux Basques to put it into better shape for operating speedier and better trains. For a year or two we would not be able to say much about the railway. I would hope the minister would ask the Canadian National Railways, when they become the authority for operating the road, to follow up that problem in a businesslike way, and make a thorough survey of all that is required to give the railway a chance to exist and to make some returns. It cannot do so today because it is in a run-down condition.

Mr. Chevrier: I can tell my hon. friend that a preliminary survey has been made by two of the outstanding engineers of the Canadian National Railways who went down there and made a report. I have that report. It gives a general idea of the present position. It was from that report that I was able to give some of the information to the hon. member for Mackenzie. I agree, however, that a more complete report might be required after the railway is taken over. The report I have was one that was obtained for the purpose of ascertaining what the position of the railway was, the condition of the equipment, the stations, the line, and so on. My hon. friend knows that it is a smaller-gauge railway than the Canadian National railways. But he can rest assured that a more exhaustive report will be obtained of necessity.

Section agreed to.

Mr. Bentley: May I have your permission, Mr. Chairman, to revert to section 17 for a moment? It would save my making observations on the third reading of the bill if I were permitted to do so now.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Mr. Abbott.]

Mr. Bentley: I mentioned this matter before when we were on the section, and I pointed out that I was not satisfied with certain parts of it. Since then I have studied the replies the Prime Minister gave at that time. The Prime Minister pointed out that it was the wish of the Newfoundland delegates that the educational system of the new province be left in the hands of the denominational churches. As I pointed out at that time, this system is quite different from that in the other provinces. It was emphasized also by the Prime Minister—and I notice in the bulletin put out by the Department of External Affairs that it is their interpretation of it—that it cannot be changed by any future legislature unless the denominations themselves request it. That being so, it seems to me that Canada is being a party to an agreement which might become abhorrent to some future legislative body of that province, which body will be unable to deal with it. I do not want it to be taken that I have any disrespect for the clergy or the churches. I do not want anyone to think that I am protesting against any one church. I do not have any disrespect for them. On the contrary, I have a great deal of respect for a great many of them. I am heartily in support of everything that has been said about freedom of worship for the people, and all that. But I also want to point out that there have been times in the history of the world when narrow and bigoted churchmen have attempted, successfully for long periods of time, interference with educational processes, particularly where their ideas came into conflict with new scientific discoveries or pronouncements.

A report written by an investigator from Britain indicates that 60 per cent of the people engaged in some industries are unable to sign the payroll. This is not a flattering record for the people in charge of education to look back on. The statutory protection which under this agreement the denominations have against anything that might be displeasing to any future legislation is extremely powerful. It is practically impossible to change it unless by recourse to the courts. What I want to point out is this. As nearly as I can find out from the answers to the questions that I and others have asked, the legislature will have practically no control over education. What department or division of some department is to have control over education there? Who is to have the authority to lay down a curriculum for the schools? If some such body has that authority, is it to have the right to enforce the curriculum in all the schools? Will there be