

*Transportation*

example of observance of the law, was answered. They went to work within a few hours, the very night the legislation was sanctioned. I will not say that like many others throughout the country who were convinced that the legislation did not settle the whole problem, they returned to work with joy in their hearts. They returned to work precisely to show to the entire country that they were law-abiding citizens; they also returned to work because they believed in the government's undertaking which I, as an independent member, brought to them, telling them that I had reason to believe that the government would fulfil their undertaking. But now, these undertakings will have to be met, otherwise, some people will be most unhappy and they might have unfortunate reactions on occasion.

So, Mr. Speaker, even if I cannot find it in the first reading, after thorough scrutiny, I trust that, in the spirit of the legislation and in all provisions, means will be taken to ensure that this legislation will not protect solely the companies, but that it will also protect the workers. But before I get to the gist of my remarks, I should like to comment on some statements made in the house.

For instance, I have heard the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette) tell us that the net result of this legislation will be to increase the risk of inflation. I beg to differ. I am not quite sure of that. On the contrary, I believe that this legislation will be most helpful if it is to eliminate duplication of services, for instance, and eliminate useless and costly lines, in short if this legislation should encourage the railways to rationalize their operations, to adopt more modern and efficient methods to prevent operation at a reduced capacity when full capacity is needed, as was mentioned by an hon. member this afternoon. Indeed, all of us have occasionally made reservations and been told that no space was available, but on getting aboard the train we found that the reserved seats were only half full.

There is on that point an obvious lack of organization indicating that, within the railways, at least as far as the Canadian Pacific is concerned, methods which I would call mediaeval are still in use. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I am under the impression that the Canadian National was more quickly modernized, that morale and service seemed better than on the Canadian Pacific. Nevertheless, there are still in operation methods

[Mr. Mongrain.]

which I call mediaeval and I wonder whether the railways are not maintaining them because they are aware that when faced with huge deficits, they can turn to the government which will then fill the gap. So then, the hon. member for Villeneuve should give the matter some thought because if such modernization is resorted to, there are grounds for hope that the railways will become profitable.

He was right when he said that it was not quite logical to give an increase of 18 per cent across the board, as our friends say, because on the whole, those who are getting smaller wages will benefit less than those who are more highly paid, while the cost of living is the same for all.

I was also struck, Mr. Speaker, by the remarks of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill) who, convinced as he is of the importance of his bill, said as reported on page 7994 of *Hansard*: "We are ready to stake our lives on that". That is not a verbatim quotation, but that is what he meant. Presumably, he will not have to do it, but I hope the Minister of Transport and all those who share with him the responsibility for the development of this legislation will nevertheless take into account all the comments made here and those that will be made at the committee on transport and communications and bring in some amendments which are obviously required.

An hon. member of the opposition also said that he noticed that morale was down among C.P.R. employees. He was perfectly right, and I do not see many members of this house who did not have an opportunity of seeing that for themselves during their frequent trips on trains.

One wonders whether the C.P.R. is not neglecting its passenger service simply to have the government allow them to get rid of that white elephant, now that they have taken off everything profitable in the concessions made to them by the country. Anyhow, I will return to this point a little later on.

The leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Douglas) gave us the history of the railways to remind us that they had received extraordinary and fantastic advantages from the Canadian people and he concluded by saying that the railway companies did not have today the logical reaction they should have by giving back to the people, at least to a certain extent, what the people gave them.