

buildings, and this, allied to rapidly increasing housing construction, has led to considerable activity in the construction industry. Businesses in that sector are extremely varied and I am sure all of them have not managed to the same extent to match their profits with rising costs.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) has said that, to his mind, higher profits, although useful from the point of view mentioned, would become undesirable if they were to exceed the level required to encourage the necessary productive investments. Basing himself on a study of currently available statistics, he said that, generally, the Canadian industry now enjoys enough prosperity to produce those investments, but that additional profits would be unjustified.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I will say that the minister has in fact asked Canadian businesses, each in the light of its particular situation, to take into account the interests of the people. Those interests are not well served by price increases that produce profits exceeding those the companies need to finance the expansion of their production capacity, which is so important in present day circumstances.

● (2210)

[English]

TRANSPORT—ACTION TO IMPLEMENT TRANSPORT  
COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTION OF  
RAILWAY ACCIDENTS

**Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, I believe it is both appropriate and timely that I speak tonight about railroad safety since the Canadian Transport Commission hearings concerning the recent tragic deaths of railroad enginemen Boyd and Battuci in the middle of March are expected to conclude tomorrow in the city of Vancouver.

I think it is sad but true that it usually takes a death or two to bring everyone to his senses regarding the lack of track maintenance and sufficient regard for safety procedures, both of which items are and have been appallingly lax in my province of British Columbia for a decade at least, and certainly since the introduction of unit trains.

During these current hearings of the CTC we learned that the rock face which let go in March killing the two men, and one which is contiguous to the CPR main line rail track, have been described by a Canadian Pacific geologist as unstable and likely to crumble at any minute. Probably if they do it would rain death and destruction on the trains that pass beneath every day.

A 10-mile per hour slowdown was first issued, then cancelled, then reinstated by the CPR in that slide area near Spencer's Bridge where the tragedy occurred. The CP main line number one passenger TransCanada passes this spot every day. I am told that a watchman has been placed in the slide area with a lantern, but if that rock face ever lets go it is goodbye watchman, bringing the tragic death total to three.

We have also assumed, because of these hearings and the nature of some of the testimony, that many CPR engineers tend to be a bit reluctant to be over-explicit in giving evidence before the hearings. I wonder if this could be because of the jeopardy their testimony might place

*Adjournment Debate*

them in with the company, since for two years or so engineers have had hanging over their heads approximately \$130,000 worth of court injunctions which followed their protest in 1972 over an identical lack of safety features and decent working conditions. I could detail this if I had time.

In any event, their protests were the result of these identical conditions that caused the deaths of Mr. Boyd and Mr. Battuci in March. Only a sudden shock, such as the news in the middle of March that these two Kamloops men had died in the train wreck, makes us think about the fact that for railroaders the Fraser Canyon is an exceedingly dangerous place to work. Yet hundreds of men who live in my riding and surrounding ridings constantly face snow and rock slides and numerous other hazards as part of their normal routine, especially in winter months.

While each fatality is tragic and brings headlines rail deaths in the canyon, or for that matter all across Canada, are by no means uncommon. Derailments caused by track conditions on both national railways in 1972 were up three times over 1959, and nearly double the mishaps in 1969. Over the past 20 years the lines from Kamloops to the coast of Vancouver have been the scene of 115 accidents, with 14 killed and 51 injured. Additionally, in another 29 accidents at level crossings, and similar accidents associated with railroads, there occurred three fatalities and injuries to 42 people. In the last month since the tragic deaths of the two men there have been six serious derailments in that canyon.

The picture is so grim that in 1970 the CTC launched a study into rail safety and has published three fat reports, devastating in their condemnation of CN and CP safety practices. These reports only confirm what the CN and CP engineers, conductors and trainmen have been telling me for years. It is time the CTC got tough with the railroads who have stalled decent safety measures for years. The decline of track maintenance is criminal at a time when trains are longer, 150 cars, and heavier than ever before. In the Spencer's Bridge wreck the engines that plunged to the highway carried no ditch lights, no roll bars and no padding in the cab, permitting the cab to collapse like a tin can. But track maintenance, slide fences, ditch lights and roll bars cost money, and both our national railroads are far more interested in profit than they are either in service or safety. I think that has been demonstrated particularly over the past year.

Treating the railroads as a public utility is bound to improve service, but only an aroused public and a zealously vigilant Canadian Transport Commission can reduce the accident rate to a reasonable level. There have been far too many mornings when some railroader's family have awakened in horror to find that they no longer have a daddy.

One of the many reasons for the derailments has to be the heavy unit trains. Some railways, notably the Santa Fe in the United States, have quietly experimented with much smaller trains. They have found that the turnaround time is much faster and more productive despite the matter of economy of scale which suggests that longer trains are more efficient. They find that is not true at all. They are getting far more use from their rolling stock and equipment by using shorter trains, even though they have