

declarations. It does not exclude railways that would otherwise be within legislative authority of Parliament.

Of course, it is open to the Supreme Court to conclude that CWRC is not under federal jurisdiction at all, in which case similarly situated short-line railways would fall into the same category and be under provincial rather than federal control for labour relations purposes. It seems to me a bit unseemly to be attempting to act in this matter until the Supreme Court has ruled. I understand they will be ruling later this year.

While all the rest of the industrialized world and even some developing countries are making massive investments into modernizing and re-equipping their railway systems, Canada is going in the other direction. One has to only look at the recent economic, social and transportation tragedy in the case of cutting VIA Rail's operations in half. Even the Americans to the south of us have recognized the need for an upgraded, modernized and efficient national rail passenger system. They have ordered new rolling stock, new locomotives. They just recently placed more orders for new rolling stock, some of it went to Bombardier who manufacture railway passenger cars. It seems strange that we can make railway cars for the United States and other countries—they have also had contracts with African countries and West European countries—but we are not making them for ourselves, which tells you something else about the present policy of this government.

Something like a national rail passenger system, something like a national system of branch lines can be made to operate at full cost recovery or better. It can be made to succeed. From looking at some numbers, it is my opinion that the Western Railway is doing a better job of moving grain than the CNR ever did. Aside from any legitimate worries that the railways unions have, the fact is that they are doing a better job and they are making it go. Now they have some real problems. They are going to have spend millions of dollars yet rehabilitating that line. They still have a fair mortgage to pay off to CNR. It will take another year or two before they have that mortgage paid off and then they are going to have to go into many millions of dollars to rehabilitate the line, including some heavier steel rails, so they are not out of the woods.

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With what they have had to operate with, they have done a credible job of moving grain. That was the reason for its coming into existence since the government was prepared to let CNR abandon it. The government should have been kicking the CNR around and making them do it efficiently. We are in a real conundrum.

As I said at the outset, we have mixed feelings about this. On the one hand, I do not want to see the Central Western Railway be disadvantaged when other short-line railways will inevitably start up because the government is frantically trying to find buyers and so are the railroads, so they can abandon lines. That is the problem on the one hand. On the other hand, the whole matter of jurisdiction, whether federal or provincial, is something that has to be decided by the Supreme Court.

• (1050)

Surely it makes sense to continue what has been our entire history, railroads under federal jurisdiction, and for the works, the benefit, general welfare and good order of the nation as a whole no matter where they are located. That should be put back in place instead of this *ad hoc* operating from day to day, month to month, abandonment here, cancel the rehabilitation program. It was cancelled a year before it was supposed to run out. There is still about 1,000 or 1,200 miles of track to be rehabilitated. That was cancelled. All that does is make it all the easier for CN or CP to abandon them because they become in such disrepair that you cannot operate on them any more. Obviously, if they are not going to be repaired, they will be abandoned.

I think it is important that this legislation receives a thorough examination before the committee and that we call witnesses, any and all who wish to appear. My colleague mentioned some that should appear, the Central Western, the Railway Brotherhood. I think CN should be called. The National Transportation Agency should be called. Obviously, the minister should be called, although getting anything out of him is like trying to nail jelly to the wall.

I cannot support legislation that does not need to be dealt with until after the Supreme Court rules. I do not think it is necessary. I do not believe there will be any other short-line railway starting up this year. I have not heard of any developments anywhere in the country of that happening. There will be some people trying to start up a luxury, elite tourist passenger train from Toronto to Vancouver. If you have anywhere from \$1,500 to \$3,000 you will be able to get on that four times a month during