

especially since, as he is aware, I am one of the members of the Committee on Private Members' Business. I want to congratulate him on the quality of his presentation when he came before the committee to explain his Bill and, without revealing what went on in committee, I can tell him that he made a good impression and that we soon came to a consensus in recognizing the validity of his views.

I also believe that it is quite right to say that such an archaic piece of legislation should indeed be reviewed, and I can assure my colleague that it will be within a few months and that our Government will be proposing important reforms. The Hon. Member will have had the merit of contributing to these reforms, and he will be able to say that his intervention today was not in vain and was indeed extremely important.

I would like to tell the Hon. Member that I come from a region, Abitibi-Témiscamingue, where the railroad has played an extremely important role for economic development and where it still plays a major role in our economy. Naturally, the railroad played and continues to play a very important role in passenger transport, but also in the movement of goods from my region, in which the main industries are forestry and mining.

The train therefore plays a very important role in the export of our products. If there was a fire in our region caused by a train carrying wood, and we do export a lot of wood, it would be a terrible tragedy in view of the immensity of our territory and the forest which surrounds us. The very idea that my entire region or villages and parishes in it could be destroyed by a fire caused by a train accident is terrible and I am glad to know that there have been very few such accidents in the past. The figures show that there have been very few such fires, but we still have to take precautions and to tell ourselves that this is always a possibility, and in this regard, today's motion is quite justified. To my knowledge, no one in my region has been the victim of a train-related fire, and I hope that such a thing will never happen. If it did, we would find out that the existing legislation is quite inadequate, but as I said earlier, I am certain that the intervention of the Hon. Member will receive a favourable response in coming months when this legislation is reviewed.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, I would like to give a more detailed reply to the Hon. Member. If we look at the record of our Government as concerns air and sea safety, I think that it shows how much we can accomplish in the case of rail safety.

If I may, I would like to say a few words about air security, where we have made a lot of improvements in the last few years. Some weeks ago, something happened to me which I would like to relate here as it shows that we are very concerned about security in this country. The terrorist attacks of which we are all aware have brought to Canada better security measures and better protection of people in our airports.

Surely that will cause a certain amount of unpleasantness and it happened to me a few weeks ago. I was at the Ottawa Airport ready to board a plane to my riding of Rouyn-

Noranda and I was intercepted at the X-ray screening. I had handed over my suitcase and an officer took it back because the X-rays had picked up something unusual and that was a paper knife which I was unfortunately carrying in my bag. Because I had letters to open, I had put the paper knife in my bag and it was discovered. I can tell you that I was slightly embarrassed at the Ottawa Airport as the security officer was looking at the weapon or tool. I was next to him and people were going by and I was saying to myself: I hope no colleague of mine or people I know are around here, because I will look like a terrorist. I then congratulated the officers for their serious and strict enforcement of the rules.

I wanted to give that example to show that security in Canada is a matter which has always been treated seriously. I could have dealt at length with other steps taken to ensure air and marine security, but I think that if the past is a guarantee for the future I can assure my colleague that his representation today will not have been useless and that the Government will soon table a bill taking into account his present demands.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will recognize the Hon. Member for Cariboo—Chilcotin (Mr. Greenaway), but I expect the Speaker to return shortly to deliver his ruling. When the Speaker comes in, I would hope that the Hon. Member will yield him the floor.

Mr. Lorne Greenaway (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Forestry and Mines)): I certainly will yield the floor when the Speaker comes in to deliver his ruling.

Along with my colleagues, I wish to congratulate the Member for Humboldt—Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse) for bringing this important point to the attention of the House. It certainly is inequitable and unfair that a piece of legislation that has been on the books since 1903 pays only \$5,000 in compensation to people who suffer loss from fires caused by the railroads. According to his figures, it now should be upgraded to about \$68,000. This is something that is very important, and it should be looked into.

I realize that we cannot do very much here today, but I will make a commitment to the Hon. Member that I will speak to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Crosbie) and to the chairman of the standing committee, and draw this to their attention. I know that in my riding it would be very important. I did not realize this was on the books. With three railroads running through my constituency, it is a very important thing, and we will look into this.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Speaker: This morning the Chair heard a point of order regarding the status of the allotted days for the current Supply