

Supply—Transport

one stationmaster received a salary of \$4,189.26 plus a commission of \$442.08; in 1963, the same stationmaster had earned a salary of \$4,105.28, plus commission of \$500.05; in 1964, his salary was \$4,277.97, plus a commission of \$486.78.

For the reason I have just given, those commissions were cut to about 25 per cent of what they received before. Instead of paying a little over \$1 million, they paid \$375,000. This stationmaster lost, in his one year, an amount of \$400 on the salary he had been paid in the previous three years. This is a first example to confirm what I advanced last year, when I said that stationmasters would sustain a loss varying between \$100 and \$1,000 a year.

I have another case here: A stationmaster writes me that he used to receive a commission of \$70 to \$89 per month and that, under this new arrangement, he would get only \$27 per month, which means that he would sustain a loss of approximately \$500 to \$600 per year. I have here the case of another stationmaster who told me that, since August 31, 1965, on which date the commissions were abolished, he has been losing what will amount to \$1,800 a year. He added:

Since I am to retire in September 1968, I shall lose in all about \$4,000.

True, we have received a salary adjustment which in my case came to \$660, but it was badly divided.

Well, Mr. Chairman, this is a group of Canadian citizens who work for a crown corporation which receives grants from the federal government.

While tradesmen everywhere are getting pay increases, you have there a group of citizens who, instead of receiving a raise, suffers a cut in salary. Such a reduction is quite important and when I see a stationmaster being paid between \$1,000 and \$1,500 less this year than last year or two or three years ago, I try to picture him preparing his budget. While this man thought he could count on annual statutory increases, he has to put up with a pay cut of \$1,000 to \$1,200.

Mr. Chairman, I think this is an intolerable situation. In my own riding, eight stationmasters have had this thing happen to them. The same situation exists in several other constituencies of Quebec and throughout Canada.

Today, what I would like to ask the Minister of Transport is that he consider this matter and have the C.N.R. review their policy to see whether there really is discrimination against stationmasters who have been working for the C.N.R. for 15, 20 or 30 years.

[Mr. Vincent.]

If our stationmasters are to suffer such big losses, I suggest that he has the C.N.R. guarantee to those employees at least the average salary and commissions they received over the last three years.

If, over the last three years, a stationmaster earned an average of \$5,000 or \$5,500 in salary and commission, I cannot understand why, this year, he gets only \$4,500 or \$4,600. It should be possible, in my opinion—and I think the minister should get one of his officials to study this matter—to submit to him a report and have him make a recommendation along the lines I mentioned a few minutes ago, so that our stationmasters will get this year at least the same average salary they received over the last three years.

Mr. Chairman, this matter may not be of national importance, but it is as important for that group of Canadian citizens as other matters which might be of general interest for the population as a whole.

I think that, as representatives of the people, it is our duty to see to it that our workers, particularly those who worked during 15 or 20 years for the same company and who are about to be retired, do not have to take a cut in salary, which is what is happening right now to hundreds of employees.

Mr. Chairman, I would have liked to raise another matter but I think that I will get an opportunity to do so when we study the departmental estimates in detail. Before resuming my seat, I ask the minister to give his undivided attention to this very important matter and, if he is in a position to do so, to let us have his version of this C.N.R. policy.

• (4:50 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Winkler: I have an extremely brief intervention to make in this debate but I should like to get this on the record today.

I am pleased that the Minister of Labour as well as the Minister of Transport are present in the committee, since I wish to discuss the serious situation which currently exists in the province of Ontario, one which affects the economy of the area I have the honour to represent, especially the county of Grey and the county of Bruce, in addition to several other large manufacturing centres dependent upon railway lines for the carrying of their goods. I refer particularly to the furniture industry. I have before me the embargoes which have been issued by the C.N.R. as well as by the C.P.R. with respect to L.C.L. shipments. It must be remembered that by far