

*Provision of Moneys to CNR and Air Canada  
[English]*

The companies' financial statements show the huge amount paid in interests. If the actual causes of the annual deficits were dealt with, the problem would soon be settled.

The House is being asked to vote these subsidies, otherwise the services will be cancelled. This type of bluff is unworthy of companies such as the CNR and the CPR and that is why I admire all hon. members who spoke in an effort to underline this situation.

On television and radio, special rates are advertised, red, white or blue, but why not a special "green" rate for loans in order to help amortize more efficiently the loans these companies are obliged to raise?

Mr. Speaker, those are the reasons why we must rise against this way of doing things.

Here again, I refer to paragraph 4 of the auditors' report, page 8, and I quote:

Interest on funded debt increased by \$5.3 million over 1967 to \$70.4 in 1968. The effective rate of interest on debt outstanding at December 31, 1968 was 5.18 per cent compared with 4.73 per cent in the previous year.

These continuous increases in interest are the cause of all the difficulties. It is not pleasant for the House to be called upon, every year, to discuss again this famous problem of credits especially when we know that there is a lack of co-operation and perhaps bad administration.

As pointed out yesterday by my colleague the hon. member for Portneuf (Mr. Godin), let us stop being satisfied to vote and agree to what has been decided in high places. Instead, let us assume our responsibilities as we were committed to do by our constituents, and let us try to improve the services for all the citizens of our country.

Mr. Speaker, not only should we not discontinue the passenger train service, or Air Canada service in Trois-Rivières, but we should increase them and make them so efficient that people will use them, thus solving all problems.

We complain about the numerous accidents happening every day on our highways. As a matter of fact, everybody travels by car or by bus.

The most efficient means of transportation we have, in spite of the very few accidents, is the train; but it is precisely the one that is used the least, which is paradoxical. It is our duty to promote the use of that means of transportation, and we will not do it by discontinuing the existing services but by improving them.

**Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants):**  
Mr. Speaker, I desire to say only a few words in this debate, but what I shall say comes from the heart. I have been a Member of Parliament in what I call the railway age, a Member of Parliament in what I call the aviation age, but somehow my heart and my inclination go back to earlier times when life seemed a little more leisurely and thoughtful and a little less hectic. In any event, I would like to tell the House, in a few minutes, why I wish to support the motion of the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters).

● (9:40 p.m.)

I think it is a valid amendment. I will not repeat the arguments that he used, nor those of other hon. members who have supported it, but rather will present an argument of my own. The hon. member made a very valid point that the financing of Canadian National Railways has become so sophisticated and so out of step with what one would regard as ordinary procedure that we really do have to question it. This point of view has found support in many corners of the House.

I do not understand how we can support a sort of artificial form of bookkeeping, and I think that is what it amounts to. If one looks back at the history of Canada and the way railway financing has built up over the years, I do not think any of us can really say it has any sense or relationship to reality. It is a bookkeeping measure, something that Mr. Laurier, Mr. Borden and Mr. Meighen discovered half a century ago to keep things in balance in the fiscal terms that existed at that time. I do not think that approach is good enough today.

When you have something that starts out artificially, if it becomes a sort of set thing which is carried on from year to year after a while you have to look at it in terms of a new generation and ask whether it should exist. Whatever the difficulties in creating a railway system back in those years, whether on the public side or private side, the fact is that we have come to a time of decision. We have to look at the books. We have to say whether practices approved by our forefathers and great-forefathers should be approved in our time.

We are younger men here. We are different men here. We are not imbued with the fights that occurred over whether this or that railway should be developed, over whether this