

The CP in-house standards were not met, Mr. Speaker, for 60 per cent to 70 per cent of the trackage. That is why trains were travelling at five, ten or 15 miles per hour. The only way that safety can be maintained on a rail system like that is for trains to go slower and slower and slower until they stop. Nobody gets on the train. This is what was happening.

There was the same kind of problem with ballast. In fact, the report points out that in some places on the E & N Railway the trains were virtually travelling in the mud. We now have the spectre of the CPR, in order to eliminate some of the vegetation on the track, proposing a major spraying program in areas of the island, going through watersheds in communities such as Bowser in the north part and south of Courtenay and using round-up to alleviate the vegetation problem. I would submit that a lot of those vegetation problems would be eliminated if proper ballast were put on the railway system and plants were not allowed to grow in the mud and soil, as is the case at present.

It is no wonder that Canadians do not use rail transportation. They are being discouraged from using it just as they were under the CPR. VIA Rail has not been given the access to the capital needed to improve the system and upgrade stations—or to double track. We just want one track on Vancouver Island; we are not interested in double-tracking. What we are interested in is the opportunity to go before the CTC and make the point that we want the rail transportation system on the island. If VIA Rail abandons it, it is doing exactly what the CPR wanted to do. That transportation corridor on Vancouver Island could be used by municipalities for rail transportation and for access to the highway.

Canadians have subsidized the CPR long enough through land grants. They have been betrayed by the CPR which has not provided rail transportation. We would like to see this government take action to take over some of the assets of the CPR. If Canadians have to assume all the losing propositions, perhaps we should start looking at some of those rail lines that have been abandoned, with a view to taking the property itself and using it to better advantage.

We reject the government's attitude of abandoning those lines without giving people in the communities access to the CTC in order to make their points.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** Order, please. Before I recognize the hon. member for Manicouagan (Mr. Maltais), the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid) asked the Chair to investigate the use of the library and reading room facilities. The library is open and will remain open until the House adjourns. The reading room is now open and will remain open until 10 p.m., after which time members are asked to use the identical services of the library.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. André Maltais (Manicouagan):** Mr. Speaker, I must admit that it is not with pleasure that I intervene in the debate on the adjournment motion but rather through duty, since,

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normally, in a meaningful and worthwhile debate, it would have been interesting to talk not only about our constituents but also about a concrete bill, which I assume, must have gotten far ahead of the actual work of the committees, and to debate concrete bills aiming at promoting the welfare of all Canadians.

A poet once said, "Liberty! How many crimes are committed in thy name!" On hearing what is being said on the other side of this House I feel that not only is history being relived but it seems it will always be so.

Mr. Speaker, I shall direct my comments to you although they are really intended for my fellow Canadians. I heard the Hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) say this afternoon that we should not waste the precious time of this House. Yet, it seems unbelievable that at this very hour, at 7.05, there are no more than 30 members in attendance out of the 282 who were elected, from which I infer that if this debate had been really so important, there would be more of us participating. I am pleased to note that the Government side is better represented than the two opposition parties combined.

In his play "Les Femmes savantes" Molière wrote that if blue-stockings were short of imagination, they at least had an elaborate vocabulary which enabled them to sound impressive. Just about the same thing could be said about this Chamber. Since 1 p.m. nothing meaningful has been discussed, and I admit to being as guilty of glibness as anybody else around here. I would have liked to deal with important matters, but since we are expected to focus on the adjournment motion, we have to demonstrate the urgency or the importance of breaking up at any given moment, so that we may resume our business in our constituencies. Government members agree and so do opposition parties. I had the opportunity to travel with the Hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) last year. We went around Canada to study transportation problems, and I think that in normal circumstances, it would have been interesting, instead of making those pompous speeches, to address ourselves to the question of transport, as you have so rightly pointed out when we were dealing with that subject in your area and in Western Canada. Now, what have we been doing for a week? We said, "Let's keep the House busy at any cost, because there was the mail strike and it is the only subject we dealt with." Later on, we jumped on the opportunity to introduce the subject of the uranium controversy. As far as the post-office is concerned, our colleagues opposite who are just as well-meaning, well-informed and competent as we are, know full well that once a mediator was found, appointed and set in his office, the House as such had not much more to do about that. Even if we meant to bring moral support to the two parties, namely the Post Office and the union who are now discussing with the mediator, we would not have achieved much. On the contrary, by insisting on hanging around here like watchdogs, we seemed to imply that we expected a failure. This is the very argument put forward by the Right Hon.