

*Government Orders*

I do not like saying "I told you so", Mr. Speaker, but I am going to anyway. When the statutory grain rates were being debated and being repealed, we were told that the railroads were losing so much money under the statutory grain rates they could not function, they would have to abandon railway lines and they would need assistance to fix up other railway lines in order to move our grain.

We were assured by the ministers of transport of those days, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, that if we were to do this, and the railroad said if we were to do away with the statutory grain rates and the railways were fully compensated for their costs of moving grain, all would be heaven. The railroads would be making money hauling grain, there would be no more branch line abandonments, or darned few, railway lines would be fixed up and the farmer's grains would be moved more efficiently. I predicted then and I have been proven right since that the opposite has been the case.

Even with the railroads getting full compensation for their costs of moving grain, they continued to make application to abandon thousands more miles of railway lines. Over the last year or two it has not just been in western Canada, but also Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces. We now have two provinces with no railway, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island.

It would seem that the only thing the railways want to do is operate a main line. That is all they want. They would get rid of everything else if they could get away with it. Well Sir, something they conveniently forget to tell people is that all of those tens of thousands of miles of branch lines and secondary main lines are feeders to the main line, delivering traffic to the main line so that the main line can be operated at a profit. There is nothing new about feeder lines or branch lines losing money, nothing new about that at all; it goes back to the first days of the railroad. However, they were built for several reasons. One was to provide that feeding of traffic to the main lines to be carried on to its destination, and then there was the matter of national policy.

• (1040)

Unless we get a fundamental change in the current national policy on transportation, this is going to continue and it is going to happen at a greater rate than ever before. It is immaterial whether transportation is pri-

vately owned or publicly owned, unless and until it is treated as a publicly utility and operated in that manner, and not just from the bottom-line syndrome, there will continue to be a denigration of our transportation system, particularly the railway lines, and the ones who are going to pay for it are the taxpayers and the ones who are going to suffer for it are the consumers of transportation.

In spite of all those assurances about how glorious it would be when the railroads were collecting full compensation for their costs of moving grain, it has got steadily worse. All that means to me is they are just keeping the money.

In the matter of the Central Western Railway, I can sympathize with what can happen if a new short-line railway were to start up tomorrow. If they are wholly within the boundaries of a province, they will have the benefit of the new National Transportation Act and will not be considered under federal jurisdiction. established before the new National Transportation Act, is not subject to the provisions of the new National Transportation Act. Hence this bill.

The Canada Labour Relations Board has ruled that it is a federal railway and subject to federal law and regulations. The Federal Court of Appeal ruled two to one that it is a federal works and subject to federal law and federal regulations. Now it is before the Supreme Court. I am of the view that this matter should not be brought to Parliament until the Supreme Court has ruled. Then the government can decide what it needs to do, if anything. If the Supreme Court rules that the Central Western Railway is federal only because of the Section 92 declaration, then the combined effect of Section 174 of the National Transportation Act and Bill C-5, if passed, would be to place all short-line railways, locally and wholly within one province, under provincial rather than federal jurisdiction.

On the other hand, if the Supreme Court held that the CWRC, the Central Western Railway Company, was under federal jurisdiction for the reasons referred to by Mr. Justice Marceau of the Federal Court of Appeal, then similarly situated short-line railways would be under federal jurisdiction. fill

You will note that Section 174 of the National Transportation Act only negates the effect of Section 92