

Mr. BROOME: But it is true, in regard to the operations of the C.N.R., that it is independent and that although you report to parliament through the minister, the minister has no control over the C.N.R., as such, according to the statement that was made last year in this committee.

Mr. GORDON: The minister has never at any time in my experience, nor has any branch of government at any time in my experience, attempted to interfere with the management of the C.N.R.

The other things that are referred to in this editorial, I take it, have to do with other matters. Now, it is true, and I might as well be completely honest on this, that there are forms of pressure on the C.N.R. that do not attach to the other railways, and that arises out of the fact that because of its nature there are agitations that arise through politicians, through mayors of cities, through parish priests, if you will, that apply pressure on the C.N.R., which are not applicable in the case of the C.P.R. or other railways. That is because the C.N.R. is a publicly-owned corporation, and everybody feels they have a right to complain. Where it touches us most—and Mr. Fisher and I discussed it in part this afternoon—is, and as I said in my memorandum, it is true and perfectly obvious that when the C.N.R. does take any action to control its expenses, which results in layoffs of labour or rearrangements in regard to matters which affect communities and so forth, then there will be protests made to the C.N.R. management of an entirely different character than take place in the case of the C.P.R.

The C.P.R. will close down its shop, if you will, and nothing is said about it, because labour recognizes the right of the C.P.R. to do as they choose in regard to their shops. However, if we decided to close a shop or transfer a shop, or take other action which frequently affect labour, then it is quite true that a storm of protest arises, and we have to deal with it. I do not complain particularly about that, so long as it is done within reason and so long as the C.N.R. management has an opportunity to explain what is taken place.

Mr. BROOME: That is what you really are asking for, an explanation in nearly every case. A question is asked in parliament and the minister says he will check, but then he reports back and says he has been advised nothing can be done.

Mr. GORDON: I think it must be admitted that human nature being what it is, and having to defend themselves in respect to all sorts of questions, it tends to make the management of the C.N.R. perhaps a little more cautious and a little slower in doing things they might do. We recognize our obligation to approach matters in a more critical manner than perhaps private enterprise.

Mr. BROOME: That is the point you made this afternoon regarding transitional changes worked out in cooperation with communities and employees concerned, so that less dislocation will take place and at the same time achieve the desired results you want.

Mr. GORDON: That is right. I say if these things are done on a reasonable basis I am enough of a realist to recognize that is the environment in which we live. It is only when you go to extremes that something happens.

Mr. BROWNE (*Vancouver-Kingsway*): I wonder if Mr. Gordon would clarify what he meant in this statement regarding private enterprise and restrictions on rate making.

Mr. BROOME: Before that, I should like to put one final question. Do you agree the newspaper people who wrote that knew as little about railroading as the politicians they are complaining about?

Mr. GORDON: I have no idea who wrote that, and therefore pass no judgment.

The CHAIRMAN: Could we get on to the report?