

*CNR and Air Canada*

in this House and state that Canada will stand firm and insist on the movement of Canadian goods and raw materials over Canadian transportation lines to ports from which they are exported.

There has been a problem with snowslides in British Columbia. The provinces say these rail links must be built to ensure continuity of supply to coastal points. There are alternate routes that can be set up. I believe members of all parties should look into this question and insist upon these alternate routes being in Canadian territory.

I shall come back to the matter of hauling coal and the transportation of wheat. Over the past few months we have had the unhappy experience of trains being delayed. As far as the terminals in Vancouver are concerned, wheat supplies are short. This, again, is a matter of proper transportation policy. If necessary, this government should invest in a number of elevators at the ocean, in Vancouver. Wheat should be stored in these elevators to tide us over periods when we have two or three weeks of trouble in the winter due to snow. This can and should be done. It should be done in the interest of agriculture and that of our basic commodity, wheat. There would be nothing wrong with the government investing in an elevator or a series of elevators, not only at Vancouver but at Prince Rupert. There are other deep sea ports in British Columbia that could be utilized throughout the year. Stocks should be on hand there so that exports could continue regardless of weather conditions in any part of the nation. As far as wheat is concerned, this would halt the demand to build another link to the United States so that these commodities could be shipped by United States rail lines.

• (2100)

I want to go back to the subject of coal haul. Not only coal is affected in connection with the rail link proposed in the East Kootenay area. If an application goes through for a common carrier, tens of thousands of cars of lumber will be moving down what we call the Columbia valley into the United States and, once again, the number of jobs available to Canadian railway workers will be reduced. There will also cause a further reduction in the revenue of Canadian transportation systems, a reduction which would affect the whole economy.

I should like to say a few words about railway passenger service. The subject has been covered by other speakers but I, too, would like to protest the increasing curtailment of passenger service in various parts of Canada. In some countries of the world railways are beginning to come into their own again. I think the same pattern should be followed in Canada. Trains can be designed nowadays to run very fast, some of them at speeds well over 100 miles per hour. In some areas of Canada there are closely packed industrial complexes where this type of rail transportation should be used. The government, and in particular the Department of Transport, should pay far more attention to rail passenger service than has been the case in the past.

May I now deal with another matter which has not been talked about very much in connection with the bill before us, although it certainly comes under the heading of national transportation policy. I refer to the Canadian

[Mr. Harding.]

merchant marine. We are a country with one of the longest coastlines in the world. We are one of the greatest trading nations of the world. Yet the shipbuilding industry which once flourished in Canada, and the ships which used to sail as Canadian ships or under the Canadian flag, have been practically eliminated. There was no need for this to have happened. Here are two basic industries. No trading nation in the world—and Canada is one of the leading trading nations—can afford to let this happen. We should be in the business of building ships. We should see that a great proportion of Canadian goods exported from our shores is exported in Canadian bottoms. I would go further and say there is no reason why a large portion of the imports reaching this country should not arrive in Canadian ships.

The neglect of the shipbuilding industry is nothing short of scandalous. Apparently the government feels we cannot compete in the international field of shipping and shipbuilding. This is nonsense. We can and should compete. The fact that our shipbuilding industry has dwindled almost to nothing, together with the merchant fleet, is an indication that the government has lost sight of one of the key factors in any national transportation policy. In British Columbia we had some of the finest shipbuilding yards in the country—in the world, if you like. They fell into decline and key workers were obliged to leave because jobs were not available. The same thing has happened in eastern Canada. It is no credit to the government or to the minister that this should have been allowed to happen at this stage in our development as one of the great manufacturing and trading nations in the world. We have allowed two important industries, industries which every important trading nation should have, to get out of our hands. We should build up a Canadian merchant marine owned, controlled and operated by Canadians, in the interest of Canada.

There are many railway workers in my area. They are very interested in transportation policies. One matter which is constantly brought to my attention is the lack of safety precautions. The big transportation companies are paying less attention to the roadbeds. Crews have been reduced. The amount of inspection carried on is, I understand, less than ever before. This is another aspect of rail transportation which I feel the minister should be examining, because serious wrecks in any part of the country could bring about major disruption in rail communications.

One of my hon. friends has moved that this bill be given a six months' hoist. I should like to put on the record some of the reasons why we feel the measure should be held up for a short period. They are as follows: Lengthy discussions took place last year on this subject—in fact, they have been going on for several years—in the course of which the very points I have been trying to make briefly tonight were gone over time and time again in this House.

We want to see some commitment by the government in regard to the matters we have been raising for years and which we have raised in today's debate. So far, there is no indication that these matters have received attention, far less the action which is called for. For instance, I refer to the fact that little or nothing has been done about CNR pensions. This question should be looked into. The capital