

estimate of return to producers for the 1973 crop year to \$4.79 per bushel from \$4.93 last September. We all realize that the present selling price is \$5.84 at Thunder Bay and \$6 at Vancouver and wonder where the missing \$1.25 has gone. I suspect that a good part of it has gone to transportation or the lack of it, in the prairies. We are talking about some \$13 million, for these two items, a luxury hotel and a 1,000 foot tower. That is a lot of money to the people in my area.

In the subdivision in which I deliver grain there has been an average of one railway tie replaced every 35 miles of track in the last few years. The speed limit is 20 miles an hour, and in certain areas, ten miles an hour. Talk about "holy crow"—about all this track would stand right now is a good sized crow walking down it. We have had cases of the Canadian National abandoning elevators—Burnham to be specific—without permission from the CTC. We find now that there are 23 Canadian National lines out of commission in western Canada because of lack of equipment to clear the tracks properly. Look at the tremendous amounts paid by way of subsidy for the two main line passenger trains, The Canadian and The Super-continental. It is \$140,000 every day of the year. One could charter a jumbo jet and fly people across the country for less than that.

There has not been much mention of various transportation systems around the world, Mr. Speaker. I wish people would look at the Red Arrow which runs from Moscow to Leningrad, a beautiful electrified line; the Tokaido line in Japan which runs more passengers every day from Osaka to Tokyo than we haul in a year; the beautiful TEE trains of Europe and the Blue train of South Africa. Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with everything South Africa does, but I can tell you those Dutchmen run a tight ship. They have a law there which decrees that goods cannot be moved more than 25 miles by truck and so they force freight to move by railway. Surely, some of these ideas could be used to improve our transportation system.

The minister says that he has no transportation policy, and I agree. I look at this expenditure of \$13 million for luxury hotels and towers in light of the situation that faces my particular area. The last date on which a train ran through our subdivision was February 25, and the next one is expected on June 15! We would like to see a rebuilding program indicating that the government has some confidence in the future of our country rather than being faced with an abandonment program. As transportation needs increase, we see the government allowing railways to decline.

The *Globe and Mail* today states that freight revenue for the week ending March 21 declined 4.9 per cent from last year; car loadings are down by 2.2 per cent for the whole year and to date both are down by 1.2 per cent. What we need here is some good commonsense. We need to knock a few heads together so this transportation system will get on with the job of moving goods and people, not necessarily in the most efficient manner but certainly in the most effective manner for the general advantage of the country.

[Translation]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak very briefly on Bill C-5, an Act to authorize the provision of moneys to meet certain capital expenditures

Canadian National Railways and Air Canada

of the Canadian National Railways System and Air Canada for the period from the 1st day of January, 1973, to the 30th day of June, 1974, and particularly on the motions before us which one might say come directly to grips with the very essence of this bill, that is the method of financing of the Canadian National Railways.

One proposal made in motion No. 1 would seek to change \$225 million to \$211 million or something very close to that. It is somewhat the same kind of proposition as expressed in motion No. 2.

Mr. Speaker, my remarks will be aimed precisely at the principle of that method of financing. The federal government through the Department of Transport is still using the same method as used in previous years and introduced a bill to finance the publicly-owned Canadian National Railways. Put in those terms, the question is relatively simple. In principle, one could not object to voting budget items of any amount, even with reference to motion No. 1.

I find it strange, Mr. Speaker, that one cannot oppose the voting of items by this House to finance a national public transportation system in Canada which is a public service intended to serve the interests of the Canadian public for the public weal. On the other hand, from the administrative or financial point of view, the matter is not all that simple. To work with a view to serving the interest of the public weal means not only, for example, providing essential transportation services at all times for the benefit of the people of this country but also that the cost of setting up and maintaining those services should not be too onerous to the point of making it prohibitive in some cases.

That is the situation as I see it now, and it is on that second point that I would like to draw the attention of my colleagues on both sides of the House. The motions before us which will be put to a vote, tackle the very basis of the bill. Bill C-5 says that the Canadian Railways System needs are as follows: road property, a subsidy of \$138,978,000; branch lines, \$13 million; equipment, \$31 million; telecommunications, \$25,946,000; and for hotels, \$5,679,000, for the C.N. Tower Limited, a sum of \$8,800,000 and finally for investment in affiliated companies, \$1,200,000, making a total of \$225,500,000. This motion aims at reducing this amount to \$211,021,000.

Mr. Speaker, what will be changed? What I am concerned about is not the fact that the cost will be \$225 million or \$211 million, but I am concerned first of all about the principle allowing such an expenditure and then, the service the people are entitled to if we vote this sum of money.

● (1520)

What is still more serious is that since the establishment of the CNR, the same financing procedure exists, that is corporations such as the CNR are financed through subsidies. What is a subsidy? It is the taxpayers' money, the taxes administered by the Department of Finance and voted by the House of Commons for the maintenance and administration of the company.

Moreover, how are the nationalized transportation companies financed. Through the consent granted by the House of Commons and the passage of a bill enabling