

Oral Questions

their reason for not entering into the boxcar repair program, even though we were offering to pay half the costs and even though I had drawn to their attention the requirement under the statute that they provide equipment for the carriage of goods. They later changed their view and entered into that car repair program. Also, they have now indicated that they do, in fact, require some new cars.

As a result, while the Canadian Wheat Board—I suppose fairly logically—had decided to allocate the cars to Canadian National, which clearly said they needed them, now that Canadian Pacific has indicated likewise I am sure further consideration is being given to the question of whether it would be fair to farmers in the areas served by CPR not to have the advantage of the cars as well.

Mr. Ritchie: Mr. Speaker, in that event, will the minister give his unqualified endorsement that he will make certain that the Wheat Board is fair in the allocation of these cars, as all farmers, presumably, will have to pay for them collectively?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, to this point I have indicated to the Wheat Board my view that it would be wise for them to have these cars divided between the two railroads. I have not considered whether I would take any further action if the Wheat Board continued in the judgment that it was best for them to have the cars allocated to Canadian National. I have also conveyed to them the strong feelings of farmers whom I have met through my travels in southern areas of the prairies, where Canadian Pacific lines predominate, about the fact that the cars ought to be shared.

INQUIRY WHETHER PUBLIC HEARINGS WILL BE HELD ON RAIL
LINE ABANDONMENT

Mr. Bert Cadieu (Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Transport. Will there be any provision made for public hearings concerning the abandonment and destruction of the Amiens subdivision from Spiritwood to Shellbrook in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, that area was fortunate enough to have one of the first recommendations of the Prairie Rail Action Committee confirmed by government action, and as a result the lines to Spiritwood and to Glaslyn have been transferred into the basic rail network. Other recommendations of the Prairie Rail Action Committee go before the Canadian Transport Commission. In this particular case it is a recommendation of the Hall commission which created the first question about that line.

Under the current law, the Canadian Transport Commission can arrive at its own decision as to when it ought to hold hearings. Therefore, it may follow one practice or another, depending upon the extent of submissions to it in regard to the line. I have been suggesting to communities which have concern about saving their line and want to be heard that they not only make their views known to the Canadian Transport Commission at an early date, but do so in the form of a brief

[Mr. Lang.]

setting out their views, so that the commission has an analysis of their reasons in deciding even the preliminary question of holding a hearing.

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INDUSTRY

PROGRAMS TO ASSIST ELECTRONICS AND TELEVISION
INDUSTRIES

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Statistics Canada statistics show that the "Made in Canada" colour television sets manufactured in December total only 11,900, as compared to 21,000 the year before—a decline of 81 per cent—and that on a year-to-year basis the sales of Canadian-made colour television sets were down 114 per cent and, as compared to 1975, they were down 219 per cent.

The Canadian TV manufacturing industry is disappearing and our electronics industry is in very bad shape. If Statistics Canada intends to do away with statistics on this industry this year, it will save money. Apart from Statistics Canada saving money as our industries disappear, has the government got any programs that will assist the electronics industry and the TV manufacturing industry during the present year, 1979? What action does the government intend to take?

Hon. Jack H. Horner (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for asking this question because it gives me pleasure to put on the record that the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, under the enterprise development program, has specifically helped one of the major television manufacturers in Canada, namely, Electrohome, and helped to put that company back on its feet. In fact, we were out of production of colour television sets for some time, but now Electrohome has gone into production because of the advantages due to the present value of the Canadian dollar. We are now enlarging our production of colour television sets. The increased production may not have shown up in the statistics for December, 1978, but I am confident it will show up in the 1979 figures.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I overlooked a supplementary question by the hon. member for Meadow Lake.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

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TRANSPORT

OBJECTION TO PROPOSED RAIL LINE ABANDONMENT AT
AMIENS, SASK.

Mr. Bert Cadieu (Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the Minister of Transport. Is the minister aware that in the 1920s Canadian National set up a colonization board in Saskatoon to encourage development of this area by promising settlers a rail line, and that the decision to abandon