

Canadian National Railways

also. We want the land back. The hon. member for Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo pointed out the various fields in which the railways have been successful, such as the hotel business and the gas and oil business, in which the CPR in particular has been so successful. Certainly, the railways can bring wheat across the country when we make large sales to China, the U.S.S.R., or some other country. In many instances, they provide services all over the world. But they have forgotten the people who pay the bill, namely, the citizens of Canada.

I hope that when the time comes for the CNR officials to appear before the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications these points will be brought out very strongly. Those people who travel to the Grey Cup and football games throughout the year cannot use the wonderful services about which the railway companies boast, such as the very best of refrigeration, etc. The Canadian Pacific Air Lines have an aircraft called the "Executive" which travels across Canada on which they have the prettiest girls in the world. On this flight you can use business machines of various types, you can get any type of magazine as well as the finest food in the world, but if you want to go 500 miles on a railway passenger train, in many instances you cannot even get a sandwich. In my opinion, the railways have purposely put themselves out of the passenger business.

I would like to add one thing in closing. At the hearings that were held in Owen Sound last Easter—and to all hon. members Owen Sound is a long way away from their territory, but I ask them to listen please because this is going to happen to them also—it was pointed out by the railways that the bus companies would take over. I say, nonsense; they are not taking over at all. From little towns like Port Elgin, Southampton and Kincardine you have to travel 300 miles to get to the city of Toronto. I say to hon. members: do not swallow all this nonsense about getting service after the railways close down. That is all I wish to say on this occasion. I would just ask hon. members who are on the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications to ask the following question of the president of the CNR when he comes before the committee: Do you not think it is fair, sir, that inasmuch as you have reneged on your side of the bargain you should give back the lands to the various municipalities in Canada which gave them to you for the service that you no longer provide?

[Translation]

Mr. Roland Godin (Porineuf): Mr. Speaker, I have been a member of this House for about five years and every year, the government introduces a bill in order to tell us that the CNR is in the red.

Looking at Bill C-186 today, most Canadian citizens would be inclined to believe that things have improved and that they should therefore rejoice. Nevertheless, that company's employees, especially the pensioners, are unfortunately the victims of conditions that are far from good.

[Mr. Whicher.]

Members have, a while ago, eloquently stated their views and those of the people chiefly concerned in their area and I deem it my duty to speak, as the representative of the Portneuf constituency, through which run the CN railway lines, and especially as member of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications, which has heard since last year much evidence on the CNR's failings which are causing serious vexations to that crown corporation's employees, especially its pensioners.

For instance, we learned during the past year that 2,500 CNR pensioners receive only \$25 per month, 7,325 only \$100 per month and more than 8,000 get less than \$200 per month, which means that a Canadian citizen who has contributed to the progress of his country during the 40 years he worked for the CNR, receives now as a monthly pension an amount lower than the allowance paid to people on welfare.

As a matter of fact, last week I met a Canadian National employee who told me that after his 43 years of service, his pension had been set at \$211 per month.

Mr. Speaker, this fate is not exclusively reserved to Quebec, since it is also that of all CNR pensioners.

Witnesses from Edmonton, Sarnia, Ottawa, Montreal and Rivière-du-Loup have pointed out with figures that it would be possible for the CNR to increase by 25 per cent the pensions of its pensioners, without changing the rate of contributions, and even without affecting the capital, since the reserves are so high that the interest alone is adequate to pay the pensions. And the importance of those reserves have been proven before the last federal election, by tampering of the order of \$371 million.

Paid every other Thursday, that is 26 times a year, during a certain time, the employee was contributing 5 per cent of his salary to his pension fund. Today, he contributes at the rate of 6.5 per cent, that is an average of \$25 for two weeks, or \$600 a year.

For its part—according to the agreement entered into in the early sixties—the Canadian National must pay an amount equal to the contribution of the employee, but it has happened that the company has not respected its commitments by neglecting to honour its payments, by simply disregarding its obligations, in short, by simplifying its obligations through the simple registration of its debts with the office of the Superintendent of Insurance in Ottawa.

One day, the representatives of the government, and particularly the Superintendent of Insurance, cancelled in one stroke a debt of \$371 million, property of the CNR pensioners, without the latter having even been consulted. This action incited Mr. Edward H. Egan, representative of local T-700 of the Transport Union in Ottawa, to say, and I quote:

This fund has been administered in typical fashion by management and with utter disregard to its employees. We have nothing but contempt for their methods. Here we have a situation where the employees are paying for the recapitalization of the