

Relocation of Railway Lines

has had difficulties in this regard. The railways must come to the conclusion that the governments of this country run the country. The country cannot be run by the railroads.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Woolliams: I am not one of those who laughed or poured scorn on the Minister of Transport when he said that there is no transportation policy in this country. It is very difficult to establish a transportation policy which would be acceptable to the railways and which would be put into effect by them.

I digress for a few moments to point out tonight in this committee of the whole the difficulties that any government faces, whether it be at the federal or the provincial level. Of course, the railways fall directly under the jurisdiction of the federal government, let us make no mistake about it—and I draw that to the attention of my friends in the NDP. The fact is that whether it is the CPR, which is a private company, or the CNR, which is a Crown Corporation, they are both responsible to the federal government.

Inasmuch as the railway have failed to measure up to their responsibilities and to fulfill the mandate which this nation gave them, both the CNR and the CPR have failed the nation. So there is no difference between them there. So far as I am concerned, both the railway companies have failed the nation. Under this bill—and I want to emphasize this—we have undertaken to cover part of the cost of certain changes and to guarantee that the railways will not lose money if an agreement is reached at the municipal, provincial or federal level. So that if any changes are made, the companies themselves will not lose money.

One has to ask oneself: Will the railways, if given this new mandate under the bill for the benefit of the people who live in urban centres, measure up to their responsibility? I am not so sure that they will. This problem will face any minister in charge of urban affairs, whether it is the present minister or the future minister from this party.

We have been the opposition since 1963—11 long years, maybe too long—and in all that time we have been screaming about the shortage of boxcars, for example. In my opinion, the railways have been totally irresponsible in their failure to fulfil the mandate of confederation and to carry out the services for which they were created. I am using this as an example. If the railways fail to measure up to their responsibility under this bill as they have failed to measure up to their responsibility under the constitution, then what we are doing tonight will be to create one more new problem for the nation instead of trying to improve the quality of life of the average individual living in the city and trying to improve our cities generally.

It is interesting to note that Mr. MacMillan Q.C., President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of CNR, was called before the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications last December 11 and interrogated by members of parliament. I should like to quote some questions and answers from the proceedings on that occasion which will illustrate how serious the problem is and how paralysed is any government or any minister to get the railways to act in a responsible manner. The hon. member for Vegreville asked these questions:

● (2030)

MR. MAZANKOWSKI: Mr. Chairman, when Mr. MacMillan previously appeared before the committee, he had indicated that he had comparative figures on the actual movements versus the targets for last year and this year.

That is talking about grain, Mr. Chairman.

I am talking about the boxcar allocation targets. I wonder whether you could provide this information to the committee at this time. It is for last year and for the current crop year, from August 1 to the present time.

MR. MACMILLAN: Last year, the Canadian National target was 99,419 and our actual deliveries were 97,040. Canadian Pacific's target last year was 101,907 and their actual deliveries were 99,352.

MR. MAZANKOWSKI: Was that for the total crop year, Mr. MacMillan?

MR. MACMILLAN: No, no!

MR. MAZANKOWSKI: For the calendar year?

MR. MACMILLAN: August 2 to December 8.

THE CHAIRMAN: Of 1972?

MR. MACMILLAN: Of 1972, yes.

MR. MAZANKOWSKI: Fine.

I could read question after question, Mr. Chairman. These railways were asked to build box cars. Is that the kind of responsibility we are going to get from them—building 3,000 new cars to move grain out of western Canada? At the committee, Mr. MacMillan said they built 3,000 new cars for the shipment of grain. But when he was questioned it appeared that none of the cars were built, trimmed and shaped for the movement of grain. If the railways are going to be that irresponsible and get away with it in regard to movement of grain, what will they do when they receive money from the federal government to change the tracks and railroads that go through our major cities?

To further show the irresponsibility of the railways, ten years ago there were 88,000 cars that were fit to move grain. At the standing committee it was admitted that the number has now been reduced to 44,000 cars. If the railways do not want to move grain and do not want to change their tracks going through the cities, although they will agree with what the government wants, when they get back to their boardroom they will just do something else.

The minister is a charming man and I hope his charm will be strong. I hope it will be so strong that when this House approves this bill he sees to it that, when money is paid to the railways, they will carry out their mandate and their responsibility not only in accordance with the constitution but in accordance with the terms and conditions of this bill. As I said at the beginning and I repeat, I have sympathy for the minister in this regard. The railways seem to believe they are above the law, but he must force them to carry out their responsibility.

As I pointed out in my example, these facts boil down to a simple formula: that the railways, although subsidized by the taxpayers, without right or equity have reduced the number of grain boxcars by 50 per cent in the last ten years. In other words, the number of boxcars suitable for grain movement dropped from 88,200 in 1963 to 48,000 in 1973 for both railways. Canadian National and Canadian Pacific split 50-50. My question, Mr. Chairman, is: Should the government of this nation, whatever it may be, permit