

Railway Act

would be the case in respect of the urban transportation assistance program because the province also has to be consulted about funding.

The town of Fort Saskatchewan has this railway line going directly through the centre of town. The town has a substantial industrial base, including a Sherritt Gordon plant, a Dow Chemical establishment and an inland chemical industrial site. The residents in this area are very concerned that at some time a chemical car might be derailed in the town itself. It is obvious that tragedies can and do occur when railway chemical cars are derailed. One can see this as evidenced by two articles which appeared in the *Edmonton Journal* on Saturday, February 25 and Monday, February 27. The article on Monday, February 27 appeared under the headline "2,500 in U.S. flee deadly gas". This is a story about a chemical car derailment and it states in part:

A deadly cloud of chlorine gas that escaped from a derailed freight train and has already killed eight people floated north today, triggering a string of evacuations in its path.

"We don't know how far we're going to have to go with the evacuation," a spokesman for the Bay County sheriff's department said. "The chemists are telling us when we have an unsafe area."

At least 2,500 people within a five-mile radius of Sunday's derailment were evacuated. Civil Defense Director Ron Johnson said propane leaking from one of the tank cars could mix with the billowing chlorine and explode, turning the 115-car freight train into a chain of fire.

This is exactly what the residents of Fort Saskatchewan are concerned about and fear. Let me turn to the other article which appeared in the *Edmonton Journal* on Saturday, February 25 under the heading "Rail 'bomb' ravages town", and again this is why the residents of Fort Saskatchewan are concerned. They fear that if a derailment occurred on this track within the town limits it would ravage the town of Fort Saskatchewan. I should like to quote from the *Edmonton Journal* article, dated February 25, 1978, which reads as follows:

● (2142)

An earth-shaking flash of flame erupted Friday from a railway tank car carrying liquid propane, hurling burning bodies into the air, showering debris and setting fires.

Six persons were reported dead in the path of destruction through a two-block area and 100 others were injured, . . .

When the first tank car exploded, 14 businesses and dwellings burned down and other, smaller fires erupted as the intense heat ignited structures up to 300 metres away . . .

The tank cars were among 24 of a Louisville and Nashville Railroad freight train that was derailed . . .

This is exactly the concern expressed by many residents in the Fort Saskatchewan area. I commend Mr. Ken Hodgins of the Fort Saskatchewan chamber of commerce for attempting to counteract this serious problem. A member of the chamber of commerce, Dr. Ralph Galvin, indicated that a public meeting will take place in Fort Saskatchewan on Tuesday. At that time an actual film of one of the explosions will be shown. This explosion occurred when a chemical car derailed. The track runs through the residential centre of Fort Saskatchewan. It passes through the downtown area, which is the main shopping centre. It is well within 1000 yards of the senior, junior and

[Mr. Elzinga.]

elementary schools. Mr. Hodgins indicated that they are concerned because a good many of the chemical cars coming out of Fort Saskatchewan are more potent than the ones referred to in the articles of the *Edmonton Journal*.

In making these representations, I am hopeful to have the participation of all levels of government in having the track moved from within the town limits of Fort Saskatchewan. This sentiment was expressed by the town council of Fort Saskatchewan on many occasions, by the mayor, Mr. Hank Powell, and councillor Bob Fraser. This area was discussed at the executive level within the Progressive Conservative party. Also it was brought forth by Mr. Mart Philbin, who lives within a 1000-yard radius of the line. Because of the railroad tracks going through the town, our concern is that the town could very easily become a chemical bomb. We hope to have the track moved in order to alleviate the possibility of a derailment and a chemical explosion, especially in light of the fact that Dow Chemical is presently following an expansion program.

I hope to follow this up with representations, both written and verbal, to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, the Minister of Transport and the Minister of State for Urban Affairs when I receive more communications from the town council and the chamber of commerce of Fort Saskatchewan.

In dealing with Bill C-17 and the broader aspects of the Canadian National Railways, one cannot help but refer back to a few comments which were made by the hon. member for Portage. I will keep my remarks brief because there are other hon. members in the chamber who wish to participate in this debate, such as the hon. member for Dauphin (Mr. Ritchie). We do not wish to slow the legislative process at all.

On Monday, February 27, members of my party had occasion to visit with Mr. Justice Hall in Saskatoon. I mention that because in Saskatoon there was a recent rail relocation program which resulted in the removal of the railway lines from the downtown core area. I commend the residents of that area for the lovely city they now have. Returning to the visit of February 27, 15 western Progressive Conservative members of parliament met with Mr. Justice Hall to review some of the recommendations contained in the Hall report. It is noteworthy that only six of some 92 recommendations by Mr. Hall have been fully implemented, and five have been partially acted upon. No action has been taken on the rest. The Conservative party finds that very disturbing. Neither the government nor the Minister of Transport has seen fit to sit down and discuss the royal commission report. The government went to the great expense of commissioning a report and having individuals travel in order to gain input from Canadians, yet they pay little heed to these worthwhile recommendations.

I could be critical of the government in many areas regarding this report. It is a shame that the railways are receiving far too much of taxpayers' money without having to account for the way it is being spent. It disturbs me that the government is paying no attention to the recommendation of the report which indicates that there is no government policy to assist the prairie livestock feeding industry or the oilseed crushers by