

Canadian National Railways and Air Canada

to hopper cars. He didn't know. He preferred not to answer. The next day he received a revelation. I do not know whether he talked to the cabinet or found his notes, but he was able to be much more specific in Estevan. This further shows the minister's contempt for this House and for the members who sit opposite him.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I apologize to the hon. member if I interrupt him, but I think I have to remind the hon. member who has the floor, and all hon. members who want to take part in this debate, that there is a rule of relevancy which is essential to parliamentary debate.

We have before us motions Nos. 1 and 2. This bill is not before us on second reading or third reading. We are not considering a general amendment. These are not very general motions, but very specific motions. While I appreciate that hon. members in the course of the debate yesterday did not necessarily follow the rule very closely and strayed considerably from the principle of the motions now before us, I think an effort should be made by hon. members to try to relate their remarks at one point or another to these motions.

I have not intervened until now because the hon. member is entitled to some latitude in that many of his remarks could be considered introductory to what he will say later on, but there is a responsibility on the part of hon. members themselves to remember that they should relate their remarks to the motion before the House. This is elementary. The Chair cannot intervene all the time. It has to rely on the co-operation of hon. members and their respect for a well-established and fundamental rule.

I am sure that eventually the hon. member, after he has completed his general remarks, will allude some time in some way to the question now before us.

Mr. Horner (Battleford-Kindersley): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The bill is related to the financing of CN expenditures, and I was simply pointing out there were a lot of areas in which the CNR should be spending money rather than to build a CN tower in Toronto and other places like that. I was referring to the minister responsible for the Wheat Board. He makes direct comment on the money that could be saved in the west. I suppose he would like to spend the money that he wants to save the railways in the west in Toronto, or other places in the east, and I did feel that my remarks were related to the motions before the House.

Mr. Speaker: I want to be fair to the hon. member. I certainly did not want to suggest that he should end his remarks at this point. I was merely suggesting to the hon. member that perhaps he might, after he had continued his introductory remarks, relate them to the motion before us. I think it would be unfair to the hon. member for Battleford-Kindersley to limit him much more than others have been limited. I am anxious to be fair to the hon. member for Battleford-Kindersley. I hope that he has not misconstrued the words that I spoke a moment ago which related not only to his remarks but to all of the remarks made by hon. members in connection with this debate while we have before us motions Nos. 1 and 2.

[Mr. Horner (Battleford-Kindersley).]

Mr. Horner (Battleford-Kindersley): Not at all, Mr. Speaker. I was just about to conclude my remarks anyway.

Mr. Frank Hamilton (Swift Current-Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words on the amendments to Bill C-5, which deals with Canadian National financing. These amendments, of course, stand in the name of my colleague, the hon. member for Mississauga (Mr. Blenkarn), suggesting the deletion of some \$5 million for hotels and \$8 million for a tower in Toronto. By any railway standards these are not large capital expenditures. However, they are very disturbing as they indicate the general direction or thrust of the government's transportation agency, the Canadian National Railways.

● (1510)

In western Canada, we spend all of our time trying to build the economy and we do not like to see things torn down. The roots of our present economic status go as far back as confederation and the building of the railways. Mr. Speaker, I should like to quote from the report of the Canadian Transport Commission for 1973. On page 1 of the report this statement appears:

Payments to the railways in compensation for the uneconomic services they are required to operate in the public interest rose to \$125,500,000 from \$81,800,000 because of an increase in the number of services qualifying for payment—

On page 2, this statement appears:

The payment is 100 per cent of the actual loss on branch lines, and up to 80 per cent of the actual loss on passenger train services . . .

In addition, the commission through a continuing process of verification and further uneconomic findings certified and paid an additional \$17 million on 1969-71 claims.

This technique of subsidies is a favourite tool of this government and it has been proven wrong time and again. Subsidies have failed to persuade the subsidized group to act in the public interest. All they have produced have been demands for further subsidies. Subsidization is a weak-minded substitute for rationalization of the area concerned, in this case, transportation. The subsidies are only a delaying tactic. For the minister to say that he lacks power to cope with the transportation problem is hogwash. The federal government has the power to regulate every aspect of interprovincial transport. Statutory freight rates for grain exist, and they will not be changed in spite of what is said by the minister in charge of the Wheat Board. Nor should they be changed while the railways receive some \$1,500 per mile subsidy every year on western branch lines.

Some mention has been made in this debate of the sale of a Canadian National hotel, the Bessborough hotel in Saskatoon, which has been bought by private interests. I think that is a good indication of what happens when private enterprise comes up against public control. I know which of the two I would sooner have running my business.

I wonder if anyone really knows what is going on in our whole transportation system? It seems to me that the government has lost control of everything. They are now talking of purchasing hopper cars but have not told farmers that the Canadian Wheat Board has had to reduce its