

Sudbury and 1,400 in Thompson, Manitoba, there were questions and statements and appeals almost every day in this House, and editorials in virtually every newspaper in Canada. Yet the CNR, a Crown corporation, has laid off over 6,000 people in the last two and one half years, all in the name of efficiency.

In explaining how control of manpower was acquired Dr. Bandeen said:

The first step was to start breaking out elements into operating divisions which related clearly to market sectors, establishing for each balance sheets which would reflect all the costs involved in doing business.

Later in that same speech referring to the better profit picture, he said:

The major elements in this performance were, I feel, the impetus given to management by the profit-centre concept and the improved control over performance made possible by our computerized monitoring systems.

When you cut away all the phraseology, that means that the CNR forgets about providing service to the public, and wherever the computer shows it is not making money, it just cuts back. That means that people are laid off, 6,000 of them. I will give an example of what that means in Manitoba as I am in closer contact with people there.

The CNR has centralized its express service in Winnipeg. Employees have been cut back. Some who had worked for thirty years in towns like Dauphin and Brandon or Kenora and Sioux Lookout in northwestern Ontario were transferred to Winnipeg. They were not laid off because they have seniority but the towns they leave die a little because they sell their homes. When they get to Winnipeg the people there with less seniority are laid off. All this means less service.

For years the CNR and the CPR have come to the government and the Canadian Transport Commission appealing for permission to discontinue certain branch lines that are losing money. They say that they can provide better service by the use of trucks. In their ignorance parliament and the CTC agreed, and now, of course, both the CNR and the CPR are discontinuing their trucking service which is being taken over by people who operate more efficiently.

Who loses, Mr. Speaker? It is the people who are laid off—the 6,000 laid off in the last two and one half years who are just the beginning of a move to reduce staff in order to be “more efficient”. The people in areas without enough population or money or products to be moved to make it profitable for the CNR, also lose. That means we accelerate the process by giving more to the areas that already have the most—Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton and Windsor, while the rest of the people in Canada are left to whistle in the dark because they are going to get less and less. That is what Dr. Bandeen believes in and it is what the Minister of Transport believes in—commercial viability and commercial profitability. For the slow growth areas of the country it means “the public be damned”.

This is completely contrary to the view taken by this party, Mr. Speaker. We believe the people of Canada cannot depend on the competition of profit centres to keep transportation rates fair and reasonable. We are concerned about the areas

### *Railway Act*

where there are no alternative forms of transportation—the maritimes, northern Quebec, northern Ontario and the prairies. These regions have never had the same kind of competition as there is in the golden triangle and cannot choose between rail and water transportation. There are not dozens of flights each day between their cities, as there are in the golden triangle. These are the people and regions who are going to pay the shot for the kind of policies which are advocated and are being implemented by the present Minister of Transport and the president of the CNR. We are not alone in this thought.

● (1742)

I commend to the members of this House a submission made to the Government of Canada dated March, 1977, by the Canadian Railway Labour Association. I will quote some proposals which they have made in explaining their outline of what the national transportation policy of this country should be. I would like hon. members to compare the suggestions and principles, which they make and outline, and suggest this country should follow in establishing a transportation policy, with the types of policies advocated and, unfortunately, implemented by the Minister of Transport and his cohorts in the CN management. I quote from the submission to the Government of Canada from the Canadian Railway Labour Association. It states:

1. National transportation policy should be an instrument of public policy not an instrument for private profit.

Compare that with what Dr. Bandeen of the CNR is saying. The submission continues on:

2. Transportation policy must encourage, not obstruct, free flow of people and goods in Canada.

I wish the member from the maritimes who spoke before I did would compare that statement with the very feeble attempts now being made by VIA with not much support from the Government of Canada and the Minister of Transport. I further quote from this same document:

3. Transportation policy must provide over-all framework for Canadian economic and regional development.

I ask any member of parliament who is not from the golden triangle what Canadian railway policy in the last few years has done for his region? Has it helped or hindered? Any member who is honest or objective would agree that in fact our present transportation policy has hindered the development and improvement of their regions.

The Canadian Railway Labour Association goes on to say:

Freight rates should be based on consistent and equitable pricing, not ‘what the traffic will bear’. Rates less than the cost of service to apply in specifically designated circumstances.

Let me just urge members of parliament, particularly those from western Canada, to compare what the Minister of Transport and the president of the CNR are saying about the movement of grain with what Mr. Justice Hall has recommended in his report. There could not be greater differences, Mr. Speaker, if they spoke entirely different languages.