

● (1530)

You can now see, Mr. Speaker, why I do not like getting these types of answers from Mr. Lawless and the others surrounding him who seem to take pleasure in giving my constituents and I information which is less than accurate.

In closing, I want to tell Hon. Members that my colleague, the Hon. Member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke (Mr. Hopkins), and I have organized a meeting here on June 15 in the Railway Committee Room to protest these cut-backs. We think that the regional development of the area I represent and the regional development of the riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke—in fact, all of eastern Ontario—needs to be protected. The Government should understand that eastern Ontario needs this type of amendment as proposed by the Hon. Member for Westmorland—Kent (Mr. Robichaud). I wish to congratulate him for having brought this matter to our attention.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Westmorland—Kent had the good idea of proposing this amendment today and, on behalf of the electorate of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and Eastern Ontario, I want to congratulate him.

[*English*]

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I wish to enter into the debate because so much of what the Hon. Member who has just spoken in describing the desire, the intention and the ability of the top managers of the railway, in this case the CNR, to mislead people, including Members of Parliament, is so familiar to me. It is like the second chapter of an old novel. We saw this type of action for so many years with the other railway, the CPR.

Of course, without the CPR, without a railway which stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, there would have been no Canada. But the founders of the country, Sir John A. Macdonald and his colleagues, realized that without a rail link linking all parts of Canada we would not have a country. So the then owners and managers of the CPR were given tremendous grants of land, tremendous subsidies of money in order to build the railway.

Over the years it has made billions, tens of billions if not hundreds of billions of dollars of profits. One would think that it would be appreciative and would, in return for its right to make the very substantial profits which it has made, try to cooperate and try to meet some of the needs of the country. But of course that is not the attitude of the CPR. It is out to get every penny of profit for its management and shareholders—and the public be damned.

I remember some years ago when I was first here as a Member of Parliament that the CPR was at that time operating two transcontinental passenger trains a day. It came to the then regulatory agency, I think it was called the Board of Transport Commissioners, and asked for permission to discontinue one of those trains. The regulatory agency turned

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the request down. It said, "No. You have to continue to run the two trains a day".

The CPR accepted that decision, or seemed to accept it. However, what it did very quickly after it received that decision which it did not like was to proceed to take the dining cars and the sleeping cars off one of the trains. Of course anyone who travelled by train from, let us say, Ottawa to Winnipeg, or Montreal to Vancouver, could not travel on that train if one could not get anything to eat and could not get a berth in which to sleep. So the passenger load just vanished.

Then, of course, the CPR went back to the regulatory agency and said, "Look, we have this second train running and it has no customers. There are no passengers. So we want to discontinue the train service". Of course, the regulatory agency gave it the authority to do that.

The CNR is a publicly-owned company, since the original owners, the speculators who built pieces of rail lines all over the country, one with no connection to the other, went bankrupt despite substantial subsidies and financial support from the then Government. Finally the Government of the day, which may have been a Conservative Government, I do not remember and have not looked at the history recently, took over these private lines and established the CNR.

People in Canada assumed—and obviously they were wrong if one looks at the way the CNR is operating at the present time—that because it was a publicly-owned rail system it would have some concern about the needs of the people, that it would have some social conscience. It may have had in earlier days. But what I see now, unfortunately, is that the CNR has learned all the wrong things, all the miserable things, all the underhanded ways in which to operate. After all, here we have a Government in place which tells it that it has to operate like a privately-owned company. It has to be efficient. It has to show a profit.

What does it mean to the railway company when it has to show a profit? It means traffic; that freight between the busiest parts of Canada, the economically prosperous parts of Canada such as Quebec City and Montreal, Montreal and Toronto, Montreal and Windsor, perhaps even between Winnipeg and Edmonton or Calgary or Vancouver, as opposed to passenger traffic, must be profitable. However, those several million people who live away from these busy parts of Canada, these prosperous parts of the country, for example, in the Interlake part of Manitoba or in northern Ontario, or eastern Quebec, must not count on the CNR any more. It is like saying, "Don't count on the railways because providing service will cost the company money". Thus one is written off and told to find another way. One is told, "Get a truck or a horse and buggy but do not count on the railways". That is the message which the management of the CNR has gotten from the Government. That is the lesson of how to do these things which it has learned from its friend, the CPR.

Let us look at what has happened. In the City of Moncton the CNR is the major employer, the foundation for whatever