

securities to be issued by the Canadian National Railway Company and certain debentures to be issued by Air Canada, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications, and motions Nos. 1 and 2 (Mr. Blenkarn).

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, when I spoke last evening before the time of adjournment I mentioned the matter of telecommunications. I spoke of the availability of service if one wished to send a wire or to communicate with another city by wire out of the city of Saskatoon. My experience, when I wished to send a wire from Saskatoon on a Sunday, was that I was advised by a recording device that I should dial a certain telephone number in Winnipeg. What happens when you get Winnipeg on that particular telephone number I did not bother to find out. I did what seemed to me to be logical, namely, I simply used the long distance telephone. Somebody says that I could have used a carrier pigeon. There was a time when that was a fairly dependable method of communication, but unfortunately now I do not think we have a thoroughly efficient method of communicating. It seems to me that the railroads have reduced their level of efficiency to the point where they no longer adequately serve the public.

Setting up the new telecommunications system was supposed to be a move forward. The two railroads in combination were supposed to set up a joint system which, it was supposed by the public and supposed generally, would be a more effective and cheaper method for Canadians to communicate by wire from one point in Canada to another. This system could be used effectively for a number of services which cannot readily be carried out by wire. The Canadian Transport Commission, which is supposed to oversee these kinds of services, should ensure that they serve Canadians adequately, but I suspect that it is simply not doing its job and not ensuring that the proper service is provided. I think this is the situation in which we find ourselves now.

I hear no declared intention by the government to overhaul the commission and to give it the kind of supervisory role that it should have. Instead, we get apologies for the kind of service that is being given or is not being given. Apparently the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang) share the responsibility between them, and we hope that in time when this matter is under discussion they will give some indication of whether or not the government intends to discard its responsibility in respect of transport in this country. We must not forget that transport and communications are two of the most vital services in this country. I suppose we will just have to wait and see what the government's attitude in this respect will be. We have been waiting for a long time and we have not seen very much. I hope that some real improvement can be made in communications so that every region of Canada is served as well as are Montreal and Toronto.

It might really help if we could move the head offices of the CNR out of Montreal and locate them in Regina or Calgary. Maybe then they would realize that the people who live there need service. Then they would know there is a northerly part of Canada that needs some service. It would get them out of the attitude which they have now,

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which is that everything revolves around Montreal and Toronto and the so-called Golden Triangle. Let them find out that there are other parts of Canada that need service, and indeed are willing to pay for it.

● (1500)

It is a shocking thing that the CNR in Saskatoon, in an area which was first served by that railroad, is now attempting to give it as little service as possible which is a rather stingy approach.

Mr. Norval Horner (Battleford-Kindersley): I am pleased to speak on the CN financing bill, Mr. Speaker. If anyone ever needed financing, it is certainly the CNR. I am concerned about the area in which they are choosing to spend money. In the west the railroads are being neglected. Evidence of that is the number of accidents on tracks in the west and certainly the number of crews that look after and tend the railways comprise fewer and fewer people all the time.

Many of the problems that have been experienced this winter are the result of the railways not looking after the tracks. Anyone can drive down a highway in Saskatchewan—the highways are parallel to the tracks—and can see that the snow fences have not been repaired for five years. This particular winter the snow has been no worse than a lot of winters we have had, but because the railways have neglected the snow fences, and neglected to cut down the shrubs along the tracks, the problem has been much more acute. These facts will fit seemingly into a plan which the minister in charge of the Wheat Board has for closing a lot of spur lines, saving the railways a lot of money and putting the cost, instead, on the backs of the farmers who are trying to get grain to market.

Another area in which the railways didn't have enough money was to provide double deck cars to the shippers of calves from the prairies. A lot of the buyers in western Canada made arrangements with the railways to equip cars themselves. They took the cars and made double deckers out of them. A plate was placed on each car so it could be used over and over again. The problem again was that it took the railways several days to move the cars from North Battleford to Toronto and took them three weeks to return the empty cars. No records were broken there. It was just another example of the railways not providing service to the west.

Last Saturday in Estevan the minister responsible for the Wheat Board announced the purchase of 4,000 cars. He didn't really announce their purchase—he said the government was prepared to purchase them some time. There was no date given for the expected delivery. No mention was made of any contracts given to build the cars, but some time in the distant future we are going to have some more hopper cars for the delivery of grain. There was no mention of any agreement in regard to maintenance, rental, or any form of reimbursement by the railways. It was just a sort of loose gift to the people who haul grain, in the form of hopper cars.

The minister responsible for the Wheat Board prefers to make announcements out in the country. He was asked by the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers) specifically last Friday what the government's plans were with regard