

know what the CTC has to say about hopper cars? It has been suggested that they are too heavy to travel on most of the track. It has been suggested by the CTC that the load should be reduced from 80 tons to 70 tons, considering the track in Canada. The real problem lies with the trackage in Canada because it will not stand the load; and the greater the load, the slower the speed. I learned this some time ago from my cousin who is an engineer and moves these cars through the mountains. He told me that whether the hopper cars are filled with wheat or potash, they cannot be moved at faster than 18 miles an hour because on the slightest curve the track will buckle and the cars will tip over into the Fraser canyon. He says he moves them at about 17 miles an hour because he does not want to go into the Fraser canyon with these hopper cars, and I don't blame him.

The minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board may hold out as propaganda during the next election campaign, the fact that the government has bought 2,000 more hopper cars and intends to buy 4,000 more in order to speed up grain movement. If we have to move half as fast as we did before, I wonder how much more grain we are going to be able to carry. I never was very good at math, but I could always hold my own with the average.

Let us consider the Vancouver harbour. The most interesting feature of that facility is that there have been no major changes for years, although we did witness the Roberts Bank development. The Roberts Bank facility, built on 50 acres of land out on a peninsula, is tremendously important for the movement of coal. When asked to build another 50-acre facility like Roberts Bank for the movement of grain, a product more important to the overall economy than coal, the authorities said no. Consequently we move that grain through the congested port of Vancouver.

● (2130)

To be successful, a port must meet two conditions. It must be accessible from the ocean and it must be accessible from land. How does Vancouver stack up? I have put on record figures pertaining to the period between 1967 and 1972. In 1967 this government spent about \$8 million on developing Vancouver; in 1972 the expenditure went down to about \$2 million. Vancouver handles about 27 per cent of the total tonnage going in and out of this country, but fails to compete with Seattle in the handling of containers and the movement of grain. Why? Because there is a congested track situation on the island side of the port of Vancouver.

What can be done? Additional railway trackage should be built over Indian Arm Inlet on the north shore and over Burrard Inlet. That would facilitate the movement of grain into the Neptune terminals and the Saskatchewan pool elevator terminals. At present it is so difficult to unload unit trains that it is necessary to split them. With additional track they could be handled at the Neptune terminals. Even the Saskatchewan wheat pool has difficulty unloading such trains. They must be broken up into three or four sections before being processed through the wheat pool elevators. This should be looked at. If the government wants to establish a transportation policy, it should tackle such matters as well as looking at the Crowsnest pass rates.

Canadian National Railways and Air Canada

Any talk of Crowsnest pass rates invariably brings up discussion of agreed charges.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but I must inform him that his allotted time has expired. He may continue with the unanimous consent of the House.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed that the hon. member may continue.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the House. I will clarify my point about agreed charges. Agreed charges are much more onerous, under any system of cost analysis, than the Crowsnest pass rates. The Crowsnest pass rates account for about 11 per cent of railroad revenue. Away back in 1954 agreed charges accounted for about 3.5 per cent of total railway revenues. Although I do not have the precise figures, for which I apologize to the House, I suggest that today such charges make up about 30 per cent of railroad revenues. These charges are detrimental to shippers who want to move 100 per cent of their products by rail to any given destination.

A couple of years ago I listened to the secretary of the MacPherson royal commission on transport speaking at a seminar at York University, Toronto. He is far more knowledgeable than I am on this subject. He said that agreed charges are a bigger curse to the railroads and the shipping industry than the Crowsnest pass rates. Agreed charges are outlawed in the European Common Market. They are not allowed in the United States. Yet we allow railroads in this country to offer a shipper a contract for shipping his products by railroad. If a smaller producer comes along and asks for the same rate, he is refused the rate and charged three times what it costs the big shipper to move his goods.

The National Transportation Act suggested that the answer would be found through competition, yet that act did not come to grips with the problem. Agreed charges have been permitted. They have tended to destroy competition. The sections of the act to do with trucking have not yet been proclaimed; consequently, trucks do not provide competition for the railroads. On the prairies, trucks could be the only mode of competition, there being no waterways. So there is much to be done with regard to bringing in a new transportation policy.

I hope that this whole question can be considered during the present session. I certainly hope that the transport committee can assist in helping the government to develop for Canadians a new transportation policy.

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, when one talks about the problems in transportation one is really talking of the nuts and bolts of what put this country together, what is helping to keep it together and to keep the economy ticking. It was tragic indeed to hear the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) say that this government has no transportation policy. That was tragic indeed for producers and manufacturers from one side of