

Provision of Moneys to CNR and Air Canada

It is evident that they are still there.

• (5:10 p.m.)

The hiring of staff rose with the demand for services and, when demand was at its peak, the number of CNR employees went up to 140,000, with a corresponding increase in the number of supervisors. Senior officials and assistants galore were hired and that was the war effort.

At war's end, the situation returned to normal. Automation and the use of computers and similar equipment then gained popularity. There was therefore a surplus staff and necessarily lay-offs.

And strange as it may seem, as this has become a habit with the CNR, it is the laborers who paid the bill. Indeed they were the only ones affected by the lay-offs.

However, those who remained at their jobs were exploited by the unions which took advantage of the Rand principle of compulsory check-off to raise union dues. This principle unfortunately produced nothing worth while but was an instrument by which the workers lost control over their unions.

To impose a new tax, the Canadian parliament must decide through his 264 members. But as regards the collecting of union dues by and for the benefit of, international unions, it is sufficient for a few union leaders to decide and advise the railways.

Here I should like to read part of a letter dated July 11, 1969, sent by the Transportation-Communication Employees Union, Systems Division No. 1, 156 St. Denis Street, St. Lambert. I quote:

Considering the financial commitments of your Systems Division, the central committee had to increase the members' dues as of July 1, 1969. The increase amounts to \$1.00 per month ... Therefore, the next pay deduction in July 1969 will be \$7.00.

This letter bears the signatures of the Systems' general chairman, Mr. F. M. Sheahan, the union's general chairman, Mr. Soucy, and the general secretary-treasury, Mr. Hlady.

In the circumstances, the employee has nothing to say when money is taken from him; moreover, for some time, he has been in the dark as to why he pays, even though his dues are deducted from his wages.

Regarding the bill and the moneys requested for the operation of the CNR, I pointed out that one reason for its deficits was patronage within its administration.

Despite the reduction in the number of workers and the amounts shown in the company's annual report at the salary item, nothing ever changes. Those who stay vote themselves salary increases year after year.

The supervisors who have no workers to look after become inspectors. In other words, the boys from well to do families are always protected, and even if the number of employees has fallen from 140,000 to less than 80,000, the bureaucrats are still there, spreading confusion and tapping the company's revenues.

In some areas, inspectors are more numerous than workers and treat them harshly.

Mr. Speaker, the situation is serious, because the Canadian National Railways management is bad. As a matter of fact, management and labour relations have never been as poor as they are now, and the employees that are imposed upon loathe the company. Untold millions of dollars are lost due to scores of accidents that occur every year.

All train conductors, station masters and permanent-way masters got their jobs after 20 or 25 years of service, having proved their competence, while the same cannot be said of the technocrats. Who are they, anyway? Where do they come from? What is their role inside the company? How many are there and above all, how much do they cost us? We are not sure of their number and we are even less sure of what they cost us. And as matter of fact, at page 8329 of the House of Commons' Debates of October 5, 1966, there is the answer to a question that I had put on the order paper, and I quote:

Salaries of CNR Employees

How many employees of the Canadian National Railways earn an annual salary of (a) \$4,000 to \$6,000 (b) \$6,000 to \$8,000 (c) \$8,000 to \$10,000 (d) \$10,000 to \$15,000 (e) \$15,000 to \$25,000 (f) over \$25,000?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Byrne) answered at that time:

The management of Canadian National Railways advises as follows: It has not been considered in the best interest of the company to disclose data on employees' earnings in the manner requested.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is not in the interest of the company to publish reports but the figures could be made available for the public which must pay the piper. If it is against the public interest to make them known in the manner requested, could the minister sponsoring the bill find a way to get in touch with this corporation?