

cars, the upgrading of track and the other things which are necessary if we are to move goods across this country.

The president of the CNR tells us that the \$31 million requested in the bill is for the purchase of equipment, cars and locomotives. The CNR ordered 3,400 cars in 1973 and received 3,000. None of these cars, by the admission of Messrs. MacMillan and Hunt, was suitable for transporting grain. In 1973 the railways also repaired 2,500 boxcars of which 1,500 were suitable for the transport of grain. I notice that the number of boxcars used for moving grain fell from 88,000 in 1963 to 42,000 in 1973. This dramatic decrease pushed the government into purchasing, in 1972, 2,000 additional hopper cars. The government wants to contract them out to the CPR and CNR in order to alleviate the problem and give the railways a few years of breathing space.

Recently, the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board announced in Estevan that prairie farmers will get 4,000 more hopper cars to move their grain. These 4,000 hopper cars will cost between \$100 million and \$125 million. The minister also predicted that short-term measures to improve grain transportation will bring a speedy end to current snarls in the system. According to an article in the *Financial Times* of April 1, 1974—

Officials in the federal transport department and the grains group under Otto Lang, minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, are relying on the \$6.8 million—

That figure, I think, ought to be \$3.4 million.

—government-railway program to repair 2,400 boxcars to pull them through this year's snarl, and also prop them up in the 1974-75 crop year.

An aide to Mr. Lang emphasized: "It is his objective to have a system that will handle and transport one billion bushels a year. Then we can challenge the producers and marketers to meet this challenge."

I assume that the 4,000 additional boxcars will be useful in removing the grain. This will also be done at the taxpayers' expense. In addition, the Canada Grains Council recently said that between 200 and 300 motive power units are being maintained in western Canada and largely used in the distribution and collection of grain cars from branch lines. These diesels are light, low horsepower units, among the first generation units purchased by the railways. Many of them are approximately 20 years old and are rapidly becoming obsolete. Under present techniques for moving grain, an investment of over \$50 million in the next eight to ten years will be required to replace these diesels.

In contrast, the new diesels being purchased are much heavier. This is creating a serious problem as the weight of the engines, combined with the weight of the newest hopper cars, which weigh 263,000 pounds fully loaded, are straining to the limit many miles of track and roadbed which are incapable of sustaining such loads. I am told that a conservative estimate of the cost of upgrading such track is \$100,000 per mile. The minister responsible for the Wheat Board has said that he will press the railways to upgrade more lines so that they can bear the weight of a 263,000-pound loaded hopper car.

According to a 1971 estimate, only 10,000 miles of present trackage in western Canada can support such a payload, and approximately another 11,000 miles cannot. If it were necessary to upgrade only half of those 11,000

Canadian National Railways and Air Canada
miles, the cost of the improvement would be some \$550 million. How far, then, would the \$20 million-odd set aside for hotels and the CNR tower go toward the upgrading of this track? It would not go far, but at least if you applied such money to that purpose you would take a step in the right direction.

The CTC railway transport committee has pointed out that the number of derailments caused by track conditions on Canadian National and Canadian Pacific in 1972 is three times that of 1959 and nearly double that of 1969. Because of this continuing increase in derailments to date, it must be concluded that in the future the number of derailments caused by poor track conditions will continue to increase, as will the number of resulting injuries and deaths, unless immediate action is taken. The committee is concerned about roadbeds because of the continuous movement of heavy railway cars over track that is supposedly capable of supporting them. My point is that much of the 10,000 miles of track capable of handling these heavy cars needs rechecking. Perhaps we should apply new technology and upgrade some track. This, again, would add to the costs of the railways.

There also have been announcements regarding cost-revenue squeezes because of inflation, higher fuel and labour costs and increased costs of other equipment necessary in running a railroad. My point is that the costs in future of some subsidiary businesses may also rise and these businesses will compete for the money the railways need. I am referring to hotels, real estate and some of the other businesses in which the CNR and CPR are involved. Recently, at a symposium on Canada's non-renewable resources held in Toronto, F.S. Burbidge, president of Canadian Pacific, said:

Where the railways are concerned there is no longer any substantial economic advantage to be gained by further increase in the length of unit trains, which operate today at gross weights of up to about 14,000 tons.

His revelation, that the full capacity of transcontinental trains may soon be reached, is most serious. In my address I have not even begun to total the required future expenditures of the rail transportation industry or even taken into consideration the possibility that railways may operate at their full capacity in the near future. I know that putting this right would add up to much more money than is provided in this bill, even if one were to average out the cost over eight or ten years.

I believe I know what the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) meant when he told this House on March 11 that we do not have what we can call a real policy for the future. He said that if he stayed at his post, he would surely ask for the authority of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in trying to elaborate this kind of policy so we would know where we were going.

The situation is desperate. We need a policy for the future, and we need it fast. Perhaps the transport committee can help the minister in his deliberations. The freeze on rail line abandonment comes off on January 1, 1975. That concerns western Canada and the minister ought to act in this regard.

After studying all the statistics, can one say that the railway companies have really done everything in their power to help transportation in Canada? Canadian rail-