

Adjournment Debate

64 kilometres an hour. Just to the south of this area they have limited the speed limit to some 25 miles an hour. Here there is no particular speed limit and trains are going 35 to 45 miles an hour. The fire chief for the City of North York said something else. He said "If you pick up the paper every morning you will see a story about a train derailment. Aren't we learning something from these stories?" I hope we are. In fact, the former Minister of Transport in this Government appointed the Toronto area Rail Transportation of Dangerous Goods Task Force to look into this situation to study it and see what could be done. They have been holding hearings.

Some studies have been done. In fact last week I got a stack of studies from them, nine in all. If I stood on top of them and jumped, for sure I would break my leg. So far I have been able to read one called *The Risk Perception Study*. It tells me that people out there in Metropolitan Toronto have the same concerns that I have about this situation. There are all sorts of other studies, routing studies, risk assessment studies, risk management, technology, speed, buffer zones, emergency responses, land use implications, all sorts of other things. I do not know whether the task force has the message from all these studies and from all the input they have received from the public and from me but if anything happen it will not be the task force that will be to blame; it will be you, me, the Parliamentary Secretary and the Minister.

If we have not learned anything from the last couple of weeks, surely we have learned something from the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) and the problems he has been having with issues of public safety. If one single solitary life is lost as a result of the carriage of dangerous goods by train through my constituency or anywhere else, there will be hell to pay and the hell to pay will be for the Minister.

Tonight I expect the Parliamentary Secretary to show us the way and to give us some answers to this problem at long last. We have had enough excuses and enough studies. The time has come for action and we are expecting it from the Government and the Parliamentary Secretary today.

• (1825)

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to my colleague from York East on behalf of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Crosbie). I have not seen the movie to which he referred, but I do not doubt for one second the seriousness of the example of the movie nor of the case he makes for

Toronto. However, I would remind the Hon. Member that there are certain limits on what the Minister can do, particularly since a task force has been appointed.

The task force is going about its responsibilities in a very responsible way. It is undertaking studies. Its mandate is to look not only at the speed of trains going through the Toronto area but to see if there should be new routes and new rights-of-way and if old rights-of-way by schools should be closed. I think that is the only responsible way that can be studied.

The people who know best are the people from the Toronto area. A large group of people from the Toronto area are on the task force. They are doing first-rate work. If they felt that there was a serious problem in the short term, they would say so to the Minister and we would try to accommodate that. Indeed, I think the general rule is 35 miles per hour, and CP itself has dropped the speed to 25 miles per hour in one of the areas.

If the members of the task force felt that that new speed limit should be extended throughout the rest of the district, I think they would tell us that. I am sure the Minister would respond positively. In any event, the task force will report in the late spring of next year.

I do not have the message the Hon. Member wants to hear today, whatever that message may be. Does he want the speed limit dropped to 10 miles per hour or does he want trains stopped totally? He has not indicated that.

Mr. Redway: One mile per hour would be fine.

Mr. Thacker: The Hon. Member has said that he would like the limit to be one mile per hour. That may be a little slow, but perhaps the speed limit should be 20 miles per hour. Who knows? We do not know and that is why this task force has been appointed, a task force consisting of highly responsible people. We look forward to responding positively to their recommendations when they submit their report in the late spring of 1988.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 3(1).

The House adjourned at 6.28 p.m.