

Provision of Moneys to CNR and Air Canada services, and then comes whimpering to the CTC for assistance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I have made the point before that the bill deals with the financing of the CNR and Air Canada. I think the remarks of the hon. member should be directed to that subject.

Mr. Rose: Thank you, Mr. Speaker; I shall endeavour to respect your ruling. I was attempting to draw a comparison between the progress, in certain directions, of the privately-owned railway compared with the publicly-financed railway, the CNR. I think there are comparisons to be made. I request your indulgence and hope I shall be allowed to make these comparisons, because I shall attempt to relate each one to the other. I think it is fair to say that many of these losses tend to be bookkeeping entries, while the remainder of this many-headed CPR complex rings up handsome profits. Its subsidiaries carry on their merry way, frustrating the renaissance of our urban cores unless they can make a great deal of money out of urban renewal. We cannot blame the CNR, either, for spending more money on boxcar paint than on track maintenance. There is an attempt to refurbish CNR's desolate image by hiring more men to paint boxcars rather than to fix tracks. Heavily-laden grain and potash cars are often subject to wreck and delay because of what I believe to be emphasis in the wrong area.

I do not think we can lay at the feet of the CNR another matter that can be forcefully directed to the CPR. If they are no longer really interested in operating as a transportation company, if they no longer feel they can fulfil the obligation for which they were granted millions of acres of land, we should say to CP, "We have given you millions of acres of Canadian land, and if you want to get out of passenger and telegraph services you should return the land to the Crown."

I do not think we can criticize the CNR, at least not too strongly, for curtailing yet another service in my province of British Columbia. I believe the public is only minimally aware of this. I refer to the recent decision of the CP telegraph system to close over-the-counter service in Vancouver after 8 p.m. commencing February 1, 1970. They did this in Victoria last August. I think it is important that we realize how this came about; it is an interesting story. I believe I should take some time to examine the background because it is very revealing. Briefly,

[Mr. Rose.]

this is the story: because of discussions between the CNR, the CPR and the union, the United Telegraph Workers, the railways made application for the reciprocal abandonment of competing telegraph offices. This was agreed to in a judgment of the Canadian Transport Commission dated February 22, 1967. This seemed to be a sensible move because it avoided wasteful duplication in many small towns.

• (4:00 p.m.)

In the judgment which I have here it is noted that telegraphers would be absorbed by the company which remained after the duplication was eliminated and the agreement concluded, and they would receive full salary and seniority rights. That is all to the good and no one complains about it. However, what is most important is that the judgment quoted the railways' undertaking that "no curtailment of services would result from this rationalization".

According to section 380(13) of the Railway Act, each company—that is, the CNR and the CPR—has the right to abandon any office in any town unilaterally without coming before the CTC. But a joint proposal, if that were offered—or a reciprocal agreement, as in the case that I am now discussing—demanded by section 380(12) of the Railway Act required the companies to apply to the CTC for approval. They did this and as I mentioned earlier, approval was granted on February 22, 1967. Subsequently, eight offices were closed, including CNR offices in Victoria and Vancouver, British Columbia's two most important communities. Therefore, we are back to square 1 again, leaving CPR in the position of unilaterally curtailing a service without complying with the provisions of section 380(13) of the Railway Act. This is exactly what they did, and what they are doing now. After two years they applied to close down various offices at certain times of the day. They were allowed to do it because the reciprocal arrangement was concluded. They once again became separate offices of different companies. This was done unilaterally.

What is the result of closing over-the-counter services at 8 p.m. in Vancouver and Victoria? First of all, 18 men are out of a job. I think the railways are breaking the spirit, if not the letter of the law laid down by the CTC nearly three years ago. In those two cities you cannot wire money after 8 p.m., so if you are travelling in the interior of British Columbia and you need money, or if you wish to wire money to someone, you cannot do so.