

Before we come to the point where we engage in tough kind of talk, and before there are confrontations and what have you, I believe we should have a clear statement from the Minister of Transport in the House as to the position of Canadian National Railways. Does the CNR accept this report as something with which it should go along? Does it agree that it, like the government, must do something to increase the pensions of its employees who have already retired; or does it regard all this as a scrap of paper that the committee worked at, which has no weight so far as the Canadian National is concerned.

This is a terribly important issue, Mr. Speaker. It is closely related to the question of the pensions of retired civil servants. It took us about 25 years to win that. I hope it will not take that long to win this one. Surely, since in this case we have spoken clearly through the unanimous report of a Standing Committee—that being a committee with members of all parties on it—and through the unanimous recommendation of the House of Commons, it is high time for the CNR to meet the will of Parliament in this regard. The Minister of Transport should either report to us that the CNR is going to do it, or he should tell us what the government is going to do about it.

● (10:20 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Duquet (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would like first to reply to the member for Winnipeg North Centre and commend him for his continuing efforts in this House in order to secure higher pensions for CNR employees. In fact, there is no doubt that all hon. members would like to see the lot of CNR employees improve as soon as possible.

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The hon. member is, however, very well informed on the recommendations of the Committee on Transport and Communications and is aware of the findings of this report which was concurred in by the House.

On October 23 last, the minister informed the hon. member that he had formally forwarded to the management of the Canadian National Railways the recommendations of the committee as well as the decision of this House, which had adopted the report. The normal procedure has therefore been followed and I do not see at this time what more could be done.

Undoubtedly we will have again the opportunity to discuss that question at the committee or elsewhere.

Eventually, the management of the Canadian National Railways will express their intentions or offer suggestions following the representations made to the hon. minister. We will then have the opportunity to study that question on its merit, and to resume discussion according to the circumstances, always bearing in mind the interests of those concerned.

Incidentally, I would like to point out to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre that in my riding there are a great number of CNR employees and pensioners, and like all hon. members I am as anxious as he is to see that question dealt with fairly and equitably.

I cannot give any more particulars on that matter this evening, but I think that we should soon get more information after the representations made to the management of the Canadian National Railways by the Minister of Transport.

[*English*]

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.24 p.m.