

Supply—Transport

about the pensions of employees of the Canadian National. I think it is regrettable that the Canadian Pacific has refused to give the minister the same information, which he has tried to get, at my request. I believe we should have the figures for both railroads. My conversations with employees of both lines lead me to believe that the situation on the Canadian Pacific is probably even worse than it is on the Canadian National.

Since in the midst of what the member for Lake Centre was saying, I indicated that I had been given answers that were a little more up to date than what he was quoting from, may I summarize, in so far as I may be able to do it in a few moments, the information that was put on *Hansard* today? I point out that there are 15,413 Canadian National employees on pensions of various kinds. Of that figure, 6,997, or 45 per cent, are drawing pensions of less than \$40 per month. One other figure I should like to give; of that total of 15,413, 12,210, or almost 80 per cent, are drawing pensions of less than \$80 per month. I use those figures of \$40 and \$80 for the same reason I used the same figures last evening in connection with another item. Those are the amounts by way of old age pensions that a single or married person could draw if he had been unable to save anything else.

Some of these employees are receiving a basic non-contributory pension, it is true, but many of them have been contributing towards these pensions, and they have all been working for the railroad for many years, yet they draw a pension which, in some cases, is less than they could obtain under the Old Age Pensions Act. There seems to be an opinion abroad that railroad workers are in a preferred class; that they receive high wages and generous pensions. Well, here are the figures, and they show that that impression is wrong. The details supporting what I have said in these few remarks will be found, by those who are interested, in that portion of today's *Hansard* which gives the answers to the questions that were on the order paper.

Now, I need not go further today, Mr. Chairman, because of the pressure of time under which we are working, and because I have argued this matter so frequently. I do press upon the minister, however, the need for considering the position of Canadian National pensioners. I press upon the Canadian Pacific Railway as well the necessity for reconsidering the position of its pensioners, including its retired employees who get no pension at all. I hope it will not be long before something is done.

Mr. Fulton: Just before the item carries, I understand the minister is going to make some

reply, so I want to say in brief form that I support the representations which have been made by the two hon. members. I do hope the minister can consider the matter, not only with regard to the retirement pensions themselves, but also with respect to the position of those railway employees who have become sick, and particularly those who are forced to retire before the normal retirement age owing to ill health, and that he will impress upon his colleague, the Minister of Labour, the desirability of making some provision in the Unemployment Insurance Act so that these people who, in effect, are out of work because they are sick—that is not the technical position, I know, but that is what the position is in effect—will not be denied the benefits from the fund into which they have been paying over many years of employment.

The Chairman: Shall the item carry?

Some hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. Diefenbaker: What has the minister to say generally? I think the railway employees have the right to a declaration.

Mr. Chevrier: I consider these matters to be of such importance that I do not think I can in a minute or two reply to the questions that my hon. friend has raised. My hon. friend has taken about fifteen minutes—I know he has covered it quickly—to deal with several fairly important matters. My suggestion to him and to the committee is that perhaps I might be allowed to make a statement when my main estimates are up for consideration.

Some hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I will not raise any objection to that procedure, but would the minister not be in a position to state the present position of negotiations with the union with regard to the five-day week?

Mr. Chevrier: No, I am not. That is a matter which concerns the Minister of Labour. I have some knowledge of it; but as it is a matter which comes under his jurisdiction, I think I should not attempt to deal with it.

Mr. Diefenbaker: It is under whose jurisdiction?

Mr. Chevrier: The Minister of Labour's.

Item agreed to.

632. Amount required to provide for the payment during the fiscal year 1949-50 to the Canadian National Railway Company (hereinafter called the national company) upon applications approved by the Minister of Transport, made from time to time by the national company, to the Minister of Finance and to be applied by the national company in payment of the deficit (certified by the auditors of