

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles)—Canada Pension Plan—Proposed extension of coverage to all homemaker spouses; the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. McKenzie)—Customs—Alleged discrimination in imposition of duties on automobile parts entering Manitoba—Government action; the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald)—Fisheries—Reason for delay in assistance to Irish moss harvesters.

[Translation]

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely public bills, private bills and notices of motions.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order No. 1, in the name of the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin).

Some hon. Members: Stand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The bill stands at the request of the government. Order No. 3, in the name of the hon. member for Capilano (Mr. Huntington).

Some hon. Members: Stand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The bill stands at the request of the government. Order No. 7, in the name of the hon. member for Scarborough West (Mr. Martin).

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RAILWAY ACT

MEASURE TO PERMIT OBJECTIONS BY CITIZENS TO CHANGE OF
RAIL LINE

Mr. Alan Martin (Scarborough West) moved that Bill C-207, to amend the Railway Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the essence of the bill that is before us this afternoon is to upgrade by a small notch what might be referred to as the social responsibility of a major segment of a

Railway Act

Canadian industry which is really by nature, a form of public utility—I am referring of the country's railways—toward the public that it does indeed serve. Specifically, this bill would require the railways to seek approval of the Canadian Transport Commission, which is the regulatory authority which oversees matters relating to the operation of the railroads in this country for all major construction programs which may be undertaken by them, with particular reference to programs in urban areas where it is proposed that additional tracks should be laid.

• (1700)

At the moment the provisions of the Railway Act require this independent review for new branch lines, but it seems to stop there. It concerns me, and I know it concerns the residents of my riding and the residents of many other ridings across the country, that ordinary citizens must individually seek specific approval of their particular municipality for the most minute construction program they may undertake in their own backyards, yet one of our major railways this past summer was able to proceed in my area of Scarborough with major expansion plans without any requirement to seek approval of the regulatory body and without even an obligation to notify citizens living as close as 100 feet from the construction area.

The mere fact that the railroad owns a segment of land in a given urban area, commonly referred to as a right-of-way, surely in this day and age should not give it the automatic right to construct facilities on this land to its heart's content without any obligation to refer such plans to the federal regulatory body which is set up to oversee its affairs. In fact, it was only owing to the fact that part of the expansion plans required the purchase of a small piece of the borough of Scarborough land that the matter was highlighted, and this resulted in numerous public meetings where the residents of the area registered what I consider quite righteous indignation over this whole matter, and particularly over the way it was handled.

I submit that in this day and age any expansion of our railways involving, as in this instance, transforming a single and largely unused track located just behind a 20-year old subdivision into a five-track major marshalling yard should receive an independent assessment by the regulatory authority parliament has established for this very purpose. There is no question that this substantial increase in tracks and railway activity will produce considerably more noise pollution and danger, particularly to younger children, yet the first official knowledge the residents in the area received was to see at first-hand the bulldozers arrive behind their homes to commence the necessary grading and levelling prior to installing the tracks.

On referring this matter to the Canadian Transport Commission I was informed that it simply has no jurisdiction whatsoever over expansion plans unless a new or extended branch line is involved. I suggest that this is simply not adequate. There is no question but that the comfort and value of these homes will be affected by this major use change in the