

some of the huge new hopper cars and boxcars was so great as to exert a spreading effect upon the tracks: the company had only lately begun to realize this and were now faced with the necessity of using heavier track and better methods of laying it. Another consequence of the heavy equipment was a marked increase in the number of broken rails, another subject dealt with extensively in the report.

What I am saying is this: although I am not entirely or wholeheartedly in support of the two amendments—I realize that the railroads have been in the hotel business for a number of years and perhaps they are bound to upgrade or modernize their establishments—I nevertheless accord them a moderate measure of support because I wish to emphasize my view that the railroads have paid insufficient attention to the need to direct capital expenditure in the construction of better trackage and improved safety facilities. Some of these things were obvious to many of us as long as three or four years ago.

● (2050)

In opening my remarks I said I was slightly disappointed with the work of the transportation committee, since I felt the committee during the past year should have investigated many of the problem areas that were obvious to anyone interested in transportation long before this safety report was published. The training of signals personnel and new engineers, the operations of the Vancouver port: the problems there are obvious.

Last year we had a railway strike. It is not a question whether or not these are urgent matters, whether we were aware of them or whether they were brought to our attention. They were brought to our attention and we were very much aware of them. We had a railway strike last fall. The railway workers went on strike for better working conditions and higher wages. Were higher wages required? This House deliberated over that far longer than I thought it should. It was all well and good for the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) to make a very moving speech about pressure, blackmail, the powers of the unions, and so on; but at that time I thought the problems were very obvious. The workers did need a pay raise to keep up with the rate of inflation that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) has allowed to exist in this country.

The Vancouver yard through which most of our grain moves is owned by the Burlington Northern Railroad of the United States. There are many workers in the Burlington Northern yard in Vancouver because they are paid American rates which are far higher than the rates paid by Canadian National. Canadian National is having difficulty hiring men in the Vancouver area even today. The British Columbia Railroad pays higher wages than Canadian National and they, too, are drawing men away from CN. As a result, CN is not able to serve the Prairies to the full extent that it should in order to move those goods that mean so much to the general economy of Canada. Canadian Pacific railroad pays higher wages than does Canadian National. So we find Canadian National pretty nearly going begging for as many as 150 yardmen to move boxcars at the port of Vancouver.

There are two things that make a good port so far as the trading of goods between countries is concerned: first, the

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accessibility of the boats to the land and, secondly, the accessibility of the commodities from that land to the boats. We have had some difficulty as far as the boats are concerned, but that is not the subject of the debate tonight. We are discussing the movement of goods to the ports, a problem to which we have not really addressed ourselves.

As the unbiased chairman of the transportation committee that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre says I should be, I was a little disappointed during the past year, as I say, that the transportation committee did not visit Vancouver to see whether its members could not lend some wisdom—lend some attention is more likely, since they probably could not lend any wisdom over and above that which had already been lent—to encourage civil servants, Canadian National and Canadian Pacific to redirect their capital expenditures to things other than new television sets for hotels; because this is what the \$5.5 million provided for in Bill C-164 is to be used for—the buying of new television sets for Canadian National hotels. At least, that is what the transportation committee was told.

I know it is much nicer to watch television in colour rather than black and white, but what we as legislators and as members of the transportation committee must address ourselves to is the question of priorities. Just where has this word “priorities” disappeared to? In the 1968 election campaign it was first and foremost in the mind of every politician. Everyone was talking about Canada’s needs. Then during the 1972 election it was still fairly prominent in the eyes of most voters. They wanted to know what were our priorities. Yet this financing bill is placing the supply of new television sets for CN hotels over and above the movement of goods for export.

Today during the question period somebody pointed out that, compared with a year ago, we are today falling behind in the movement of wheat to export markets by some 125 million bushels. I do not deny that figure since the Canadian Wheat Board officials appeared before the committee that I have the honour to chair and admitted a month ago that we were 75 million bushels behind, so we might well be behind by 125 million bushels today. Why is there not some kind of priority list, or list of things waiting to be done ranked in terms of importance?

Another great question arising on the Prairies today is the supply of boxcars. The Wheat Board declared that we need 4,000 additional boxcars. It is interesting to go back through *Hansard* and check one’s remarks to see whether one was on target a year ago, two years ago, three years ago, or whether one was not. If you find you were on target, it sometimes gives you a little more confidence when you come to make a speech. On March 8, 1972, long before the 1972 election, even before the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board announced the building of 2,000 boxcars for the Canadian Wheat Board, I happened to say that we ought to build some hopper cars for the Canadian Wheat Board to operate.

On the same day I also said we should build a branch line from Ashcroft to Lillooet, and I understand surveys are now being made in that regard. On that date I also said that before the summer rock slides and the winter snow flies, the slide detector fences, which had become completely unsafe between Kamloops and Boston Bar, should