

both national railway systems and they could have been required to buy that rolling stock.

We considered the Canadian National financing bill, and the entire \$48 million could have been included in it one year ago. The minister knows that. For him to pretend and suggest that the cars have to be bought by the Canadian Wheat Board because the railways would not buy them, or could not, is nonsense, and he knows it.

The people of western Canada and members of all parties have been pleading for many years for an improvement in equipment used to handle grain. The minister's position is completely illogical. If it is logical for the Canadian Wheat Board to purchase hopper cars for the movement of grain, it is equally logical, I suggest, for the government to buy other cars for other uses. I am sure the hon. member for Medicine Hat, who has a great deal of experience with livestock movement, would agree with that. Every year there is a crying need for stock cars for moving cattle. Following the logic of the minister's position, does the minister not think that the government should also purchase another couple of thousands stock cars so that we can solve the chronic problem that arises every year of insufficient rolling-stock to move cattle to eastern Canadian and U.S. markets?

This problem has been with us ever since I began working for the railway in 1947. Will the minister also, if he is to follow through with his logic, not purchase refrigerator cars? Every year there is a chronic shortage of refrigerator cars for moving potatoes from the maritime provinces, particularly P.E.I. and New Brunswick, to market. Does the minister, in his logic, not think that the government ought to purchase 2,000 refrigerator cars to move potatoes out of the maritime provinces to central Canadian and eastern U.S. markets?

The minister talked much of being non-political and of not following narrow, partisan lines, yet he threw out the nonsense that members from other parties opposed the purchase of hopper cars. Such is not the case and he knows it. He ridiculed statements made by hon. members who pointed out that United States grain has been moving on Canadian rail lines, in Canadian equipment, to U.S. ports and he tried to tell us that that is all right at this time of year because there is no need for equipment to move Canadian grain to Canadian ports. Let us remind the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board, if he feels that we do not need that equipment, that 450 rail cars of the CPR are being used to move American grain. Let me remind the minister in charge of the Wheat Board that there is space for 63 million bushels at the lakehead. Why not utilize some of that space? If he feels that at this time of year Canadian equipment is not badly needed, why does he not phone the Canadian Wheat Board and suggest that they use those 450 Canadian Pacific Railway cars for moving grain to Thunder Bay? I am sure he will find the Canadian Wheat Board and the elevator companies only too happy to say yes. If the Canadian Pacific Railway wants to haul U.S. grain over its tracks, let it use U.S. equipment to do so.

The minister made a great fuss about elevators working a seven-day week. When I asked him if he meant country elevators or terminals, he said mainly terminals, if I heard him correctly. The minister knows as well as anyone does

### *Supply*

that long before these hopper cars were delivered, and about the time it was decided to buy them, the terminals in Vancouver were operating five days a week, week after week. The railways were incapable of delivering sufficient grain to keep them operating seven days a week, and the minister knows it.

I am sure the minister remembers the tables the Saskatchewan wheat pool sent out. In some weeks elevators worked two days, in some weeks three days and sometimes they were on a four-day week because the railways did not spot enough cars to enable them to keep working for five days a week, let alone seven. What the minister suggested was nonsense when he said that because elevator companies would not go on a seven-day week they would encounter problems handling large amounts of grain. The elevator companies will be able to handle 750 million or 800 million bushels of grain and work every day of a five-day week if the minister will see that sufficient cars are spotted every 24 hours over five successive days to the elevators in order to keep the shifts working. The minister has thrown out nothing but strawmen and heifer dust, as I said, ever since the announcement he made one year ago, and it will not wash.

I shall ask the minister some questions in a moment. Another point was made with respect to rail links in British Columbia. The present government and its predecessor, the Conservative party, allowed the Canadian Pacific Railway to let its rail system in British Columbia deteriorate. I am speaking of the entire Kettle Valley line through the Crownsnest pass, that second route through British Columbia. It has now reached the point of not being as good as some branch lines. Here is the second rail link in British Columbia and it has been neglected for 20 years.

I ask the minister if he will note some specific questions regarding the handling of hopper cars. Earlier in the House, as I recall his replies, he suggested that agreement had been reached with the railroads over the handling of these cars. I believe in an earlier public statement he had said that arrangements had been made. He can correct me if I am wrong or partly wrong. When we examined in committee the supplementary estimates of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, I heard that the matter had not been resolved either in whole or in part. In any event, it sounded to me as if the official was saying the opposite of what the minister had said. I should like to know which of these things has not been resolved. Can the minister tell us who is collecting the freight charges? I wonder if the minister can listen to me, Mr. Chairman, while conversing with his colleague.

**Mr. Lang:** I can listen with one ear.

**Mr. Nielsen:** The minister can listen to the hon. member without any ears.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Will the minister tell us who collects the freight charges with respect to these hopper cars? Are the hopper cars leased to the railways, or is there merely a verbal arrangement under which they have agreed to put them between an engine and a caboose?