

the setting of freight rates. We on this side of the House argued that though the stage might one day be reached in Canada at which competition would be keen enough to influence freight rates, such a stage had not yet been reached. We admitted that progress was being made toward that point, but it had not been reached.

Watching the television reports yesterday of the Federal-Provincial Conference it became evident that our concern, expressed a couple of years ago, had been fully justified. Four western premiers all agreed that transportation costs and freight rates were still far too high; they still felt justified in asking for fairer treatment and more consideration in this respect. Answering a question directed to one part of the transportation problem, namely, the proposals for railway line abandonment, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) had this to say as reported at page 642 of *Hansard* for November 7:

I would be glad to consider that suggestion but I believe the procedures are well established under the act. There is ample opportunity for representations to be made by all parties. In any event, should the decision of the CTC be challenged by any authority, then there is a right to appeal to the Governor in Council.

● (4:50 p.m.)

In other words, what he is saying is that the whole question of freight rates and passenger traffic should be taken to the CTC. In the absence of a satisfactory solution there, appeal may be had to the Governor in Council—in other words, to the minister and his government. The whole problem is that we in this House have shelved our real responsibility. No longer do we thoroughly examine CNR financing or the loan made by CNR to Air Canada. We do not examine those matters in depth. This afternoon we reached agreement that we would refer the financing structure of the CNR to a committee. Although this agreement was not to my liking, since prior arrangements had been made between two of the parties I went along with it. I suggest we in this House of Commons are slowly giving up our rights to examine the actions of government agencies that affect people across the country. People are complaining and are sufficiently agitated about the matter even to demonstrate.

The costing formula laid down by the CTC will greatly affect the financing both of the CNR and the CPR. At page 642 of *Hansard* the Minister of Transport admitted that if anybody did want to challenge a decision by the CTC they could appeal to the Governor in

*Provision of Moneys to CNR and Air Canada* Council. But in this particular case the railway companies did not so appeal. On the other hand, the government did not state their position as to the costing formula. The railroads are going to appeal, not to the Governor in Council but to the Supreme Court of Canada, to the highest court of the land. One could say that it really is taking the matter further and further out of the hands of the people directly concerned. I say that bearing in mind it is very difficult to defend the CNR and CPR costing figures. The people who prepared the figures would find it difficult to develop arguments before the Supreme Court of Canada, to say nothing of the cost of so doing, whether in the form of a provincial government body, a municipal body, a rail line abandonment association, or what have you.

The situation is grave and further consideration should be given to it by the House. I say that in view of concern expressed at the Federal-Provincial Conference by western premiers, and particularly in view of the remarks of the Prime Minister, who in reply to the Premier of Saskatchewan said that while this is not in fact a constitutional matter, it does relate to the whole problem. Certainly we in western Canada have long felt that transportation, the Crowsnest Pass rates and the whole gamut of east-west movement of goods, is part and parcel, as I have said many times, of a moral constitution vis-à-vis western Canada's commitment to a united Canada.

One other matter that I think needs to be emphasized before this bill passes is team spirit. There is no question that any organization that lacks spirit, drive and energy on the part of its employees will undoubtedly lose and continue to lose money. According to recent figures, employment of linemen in the CNR is down to a little over 80,000. A few years ago the figure was 110,000 but it has dropped continually. Applications are at this moment before the CTC to abandon rail lines and to discontinue certain passenger services. If the Commission rules in favour of the abandonment of many railway lines and the discontinuance of a great part of the present passenger services, which still play a very important part in linking Canada together, there is no doubt in my mind that this will mean further reduction of employment in the CNR.

On the question of seniority, one must have well over ten years', nearly 15 years' service, in order to get in any runs. Whether a man be a conductor, an engineer or a brakeman,