

*Transportation*

The Minister of Agriculture.

—told newsmen that the C.P.R. should abandon oil rights "and other amenities" if it wanted to claim a right to rail line abandonments on strictly economic principles.

It is too bad the Minister of Agriculture could not put some emphasis on this matter when we were debating the question of branch line abandonment. It is lucky for us that after this bill passes branch line abandonments will be considered by the transport commission which is to be set up. I should like to see the Minister of Agriculture representing some of the people in rural areas in which lines are to be abandoned and hear him state publicly then that the Canadian Pacific should abandon its oil rights and other amenities if it wanted to claim the right to rail line abandonment on strictly economic principles. These are very sound words. It is too bad the minister did not pronounce them more often during the last two weeks.

● (4:40 p.m.)

I could go on quoting from the remarks made by the Minister of Agriculture during his western swing. He said:

Some very drastic action should be taken...to ensure that grain can be moved as quickly as possible.

Is this bill going to answer that problem? The Minister of Agriculture never told us what the drastic action would be under this bill during the two weeks we have been discussing it. I hope he will take part in the debate on clause 1 and tell us just how this bill can be improved before third reading and what drastic action he is considering.

In the same newspaper, he is also reported as follows:

"The first thing that made me see red," he said—

I suppose he is another one who loses his temper.

—was a situation that arose when Canada sought to send grain to help relieve famine in India.

"Even though the country had the commodities and shipping available," he said, "it was not able to move the grain because of railway limitations."

We hear all this talk about rail line abandonment and we have a minister of the Crown who went out west so he realizes there are many limitations on the railways and our grain is not able to move. This is an interesting point that was not made earlier in this debate.

I should like to quote from the *Star-Phoenix* of January 14, 1966 some further sentiments attributed to the minister. He has not

[Mr. Horner (Acadia).]

been very forthright in the last two weeks during this debate but apparently he was forthright during that western swing to test the climate. This editorial reads in part:

But Mr. Greene did echo the sentiments of many prairie citizens that as far as the current grain movement situation is concerned, "We might as well be back in the stone age."

This statement verifies the point I was making earlier that there has to be a good deal of modernization of the railway plant and grain handling equipment. However, the minister has not made any suggestions in this regard.

The *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* of January 21, 1966 deals with what the Minister of Agriculture had to say about the Canadian Pacific. Then the minister went on to deal with the farmers. We have not heard him speak for the farmers lately. He was going to do something with regard to farm machinery prices. I tie in all these remarks because in this bill we are taking the wraps off the railways. They can earn as much as they like. They can charge as much as the traffic will bear.

The minister was going to do great things with regard to farm machinery but he has not done anything. He has not even produced a set of guide lines. Some of the other ministers have relied heavily on guidelines but he has not produced any. He made a bold statement about the railway situation in western Canada. We have had a long, difficult debate on this bill, but not once did he give us the benefit of his wisdom. Not once did he stand up in the house and say, "I have a duty to speak when the farmers are prejudiced as they are." Not once did the minister take part in this debate to outline the modernization that he felt should take place in grain handling.

I should like to say one more thing about the movement of grain while we are on this aspect of the problems of western Canada and our whole transport system. Many members will wonder why we debated the question of the Crowsnest pass rates review so hotly. Here is a very good example. I should like to quote from an editorial in the *Montreal Gazette* for January 20. The heading is "Botched Bill". The editorial makes reference to last Wednesday when we defeated clause 50. One sentence in the editorial reads:

What is certainly an issue is how much the railways should be paid for carrying such products at uneconomic rates.