

CNR and Air Canada

Mr. Deachman: Mr. Speaker, if I were the Prime Minister, who is the only member of this House who can make appointments to the Senate, I would say to the hon. member for LaSalle, "It breaks my heart not to be able to send you there, but the boys in the House of commons want you on the transportation committee. Your time has not yet come."

Mr. Horner: Put me in the Senate, then.

Mr. Deachman: I will put in a word for you.

Mr. Horner: Thank you.

Mr. Deachman: Last evening, when we were debating this subject, one hon. member went to considerable lengths to point out the faults of the railway and describe how in terms of equipment, service, cleanliness and just about everything you can think of it was not living up to expectations. Tonight I want to say a few things on behalf of the railway. That may seem strange, but I think we should be realistic, look at what is taking place in the country and assess it.

I have here a press release issued last year by the CNR dealing with grain traffic. I should like to refresh the memories of hon. members about what is taking place in the movement of bulk commodities and grain in the west. This release is dated July 31, points out that Canadian National had just completed the best annual grain handling job in their history and goes on to say:

Reasons largely responsible for setting a number of new grain handling records in the 1970-71 crop year, which ends today (July 31), included a new pool unloading system instituted at the west coast and Thunder Bay terminal elevators, as well as CN's introduction of 1,400 covered hopper cars in the grain trade and the operation of 52 grain unit trains of 100 such cars each.

The pool unloading system now operating at Thunder Bay and Vancouver provides faster turn-around of railway cars. It was made possible through co-operative efforts between grain companies.

Many new export records also were established in the grain handling system, Mr. Gardiner added. The railways delivered more than 690 million bushels of all grains, five million bushels more than the previous record established in the 1963-64 crop year.

Then it says:

Nearly 260 million bushels of grain were handled through west coast ports in the 1970-71 crop year. This is about 25 million bushels more than the previous record year of 1965-66.

Mr. Woolliams: That is like saying you are one year older than last year.

Mr. Deachman: The release continues:

During the 1970-71 crop year, CN loaded 177,000 cars of grain, surpassing the previous record of 175,000 carloads. It also was pointed out by Mr. Gardiner that CN loading to Thunder Bay and Vancouver of wheat, oats, barley, rye, flaxseed and rapeseed all showed substantial average bushel increases per car than was achieved in the 1969-70 crop year.

It is also worth while to refer to the 1970 annual report of Canadian National Railways where they give statistics in regard to new equipment. This is a matter which has been discussed in the course of this debate. At page 10 the report points out:

During 1970 a total of 4,546 new freight units were acquired. These

[Mr. Horner.]

included steel-covered hoppers for potash, fertilizer and general service; bulkhead flatcars for international lumber service; newsprint boxcars; coal cars and Piggyback flat cars. In addition 51 diesel-electric locomotives of 3,000 horsepower each and 20 of 3,600 horsepower each were delivered during the year. On order at year end were 12 diesel-electric locomotives of 2,000 horsepower each, 20 of 3,600 horsepower, and 66 of 3,000 horsepower.

These facts escape the hon. member opposite who felt that the replacement had come to an end and that we were dealing with an antiquated railway system. The report deals with containerization at page 11 as follows:

In the spring, Japanese lines started operating regular container services into the newly constructed centennial pier in Vancouver, and this operation is expected to expand in the coming year.

One of the biggest, if not the biggest, containerized vessels in the world is now arriving on the east coast, and equally big and modern vessels are arriving on the west coast. The day is not far distant when freight will be moved in this way around the world, arriving in Vancouver on fast, ocean-going vessels which will discharge the containers on to trains which will move across the continent, then the containers will be placed on vessels at the east coast and thus shipped across the Atlantic.

• (2030)

Mr. Gleave: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question.

Mr. Deachman: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that I have a listener who wants to ask a question.

Mr. Gleave: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The hon. member knows that he may ask a question only if the hon. member who has the floor agrees, since the time taken is subtracted from the time allotted to the hon. member.

Mr. Deachman: I will be delighted to answer.

Mr. Gleave: Mr. Speaker, disregarding for a moment

Mr. Gleave: Mr. Speaker, disregarding for a moment the euphoria of the hon. member over the modernization which he has described, can he tell us why the minister in charge of the Wheat Board said in the House today that orders for deliveries of grain cannot be accepted at Vancouver? If existing facilities are sufficient, why has the minister in charge of the Wheat Board informed this House that the authorities cannot accept orders for grain deliveries?

Mr. Deachman: Mr. Speaker, I am not here to expound on the minister's problems.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gleave: They are not the minister's problems, they are the farmers' problems.

Mr. Horner: They are the problems of all western Canada.

Mr. Deachman: Mr. Speaker, let me point once more to the figures which show what has taken place in the movement of grain on the west coast. I think the hon. member opposite knows as well as I do that in the course of a very