

*Canadian National Railways and Air Canada*

unnamed sum during 1974, and so on. If this is such a good deal, let them go on the market and borrow the money at conventional rates, or sell the tower to someone who can complete it and run it properly. Let us not have any more of the people of Canada being dragged in by the ear to pay for somebody else's grandiose schemes to make themselves important and to build themselves a new empire. The national railway was not set up for a new empire; it was set up to handle freight and to serve the people of Canada.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Blenkarn:** It is about time we had commuter trains. It is time our grain was moved, our potatoes from New Brunswick, lumber from British Columbia, and oil. It is time we had a railway that was interested in using the money we supply to move the goods and the people. This railroad is supposed to move people. They do everything they can to avoid moving people. They really do not care. They want to get involved in another venture. They like the situation where they can become real estate developers. That is a great business; there are a lot of real estate developers. These fellows are not very good at real estate development. They like to be in a situation where they have liquor licences and run fancy-dancy hotels with restaurants in the sky. They are not even good at moving people and freight, but at least that is their job. If they spent their time moving people and freight, maybe they would do a better job.

It is about time this House of Commons said to them in no uncertain terms that they are not getting any money for their hotels and tower, and they had better get the money for these things somewhere else and do the job they are supposed to do. It is about time this nation had a railroad that cares about its people.

**Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the remarks of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). I assure the House that my remarks on these two amendments will be brief. However, as chairman of the committee there are some things I should say with regard to the bill and the amendments. First, the basic purpose and meaning of the amendment is that the railroad's main concentration of interest and expenditure of dollars should be in the transportation industry. This is where they began, particularly the Canadian National, and this is where their main interest should lie.

● (2040)

We who come from western Canada have from time to time expressed annoyance with Canadian Pacific because of the company's attempts to divert its interests from railroading to various investments, or from railroading to airlines. Basically the amendments suggest there should be a return to the transportation concept. As chairman of the committee I can say that, while I appreciate the support of members of all parties, I have been a little disappointed in the scope of the committee's work. I would much like to have seen the annual reports of the CN and Air Canada referred to the committee for study in depth; it would have been much easier for me then to have ruled on the question whether various amendments were in order, whether in fact they fell within the ambit of Bill

[Mr. Blenkarn.]

C-164. Bill C-164 deals with the expenditure of moneys, and the amendments which were presented have to do with clauses involving expenditures; they represent an attempt to delete \$5.5 million to be spent on hotels and \$8.8 million to be spent on a communications tower.

There are other questions which I feel should have been more fully dealt with by the transport committee over the past years, particularly those directly involving the movement of goods across Canada and the security of those goods. Very recently the transport commission published its third report on railway safety. Three years ago the transport committee touched upon the safety aspect in the course of its work; I clearly remember a Mr. Jones appearing before the committee to answer a number of questions on this subject. The report recently tabled suggests that more money ought to be spent on railway safety. The standard reply by the railroads was along these lines, "These reports are old hat, because we have already dealt with many of the recommendations which have been made."

Nevertheless, I should point out that a number of specific conclusions have been drawn. The report says that the number of derailments caused by track conditions on CN and CP lines in 1972 was three times as great as in 1959 and nearly double what it was in 1969. That is clear enough. One can conclude that the railways have curtailed expenditure on the inspection of railway trackage or that they have built huge boxcars and hopper cars far too heavy for the capacity of the tracks to bear.

The report goes on to say that the training of signals staff and others has deteriorated in recent years. One might conclude that there has been a failure to spend money in the right direction, since it is obvious that a decline in the training standards of signals staff and others could well result in a greater number of accidents. The report goes on to infer that the problems caused by hot-boxes and journal burn-outs—those are terms commonly used among railwaymen—have not yet been solved.

Mr. Speaker, three years ago I asked in the transport committee what percentage of the rolling-stock was still using the old hot-boxes, the old type of bearing system, that is to say, a system which made no use of roller bearings—Timken or similar bearings. The officials replied that only 19 per cent of the rolling-stock was equipped with roller bearings or Timken bearings. Again, this would suggest that the finances available to the railways have not been used in the right direction. At about the same time, three very serious accidents occurred in the interior of British Columbia, making the movement of grain that winter extremely difficult. It became obvious to railway personnel and others that the snowslide detector fences were completely beyond repair, that they were not being kept up at all. This was pointed out to the CTC by the transport committee, particularly to one of the commissioners, Mr. Jones. He undertook to look into the situation and examine the position. However, the report which has lately come to hand devotes six pages to this whole question, explaining how the snowslide detector fences in the region are in fact not being kept up at all.

Another point of interest arose during the committee proceedings when officials of the CN were before us. One of them, Mr. Hunt, stated categorically that the weight of