

*Railway Operations Act*

**The Deputy Chairman:** It being six o'clock, pursuant to special order made earlier this day I do now leave the chair until 8 p.m.

At six o'clock the committee took recess.

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**AFTER RECESS**

The committee resumed at 8 p.m.

**The Assistant Deputy Chairman:** Order, please. The House is again in committee of the whole on Bill C-217. The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar has the floor.

**Mr. Gleave:** Mr. Chairman, I just want to say a few words in respect of the pension issue. The hon. member for Vancouver South quoted the minister on the pension issue, but it could stand being mentioned again. The minister said:

Consequently, I have appointed an industrial inquiry commission pursuant to Part V of the Canada Labour Code, to estimate the cost of the negotiated settlement relating to pensions and comment on any differences between its cost estimate and that of the railway companies. I might add that today I appointed Dr. John Deutsch to be the industrial inquiry commissioner to conduct this inquiry.

I have respect for Mr. Deutsch. As a matter of fact I served on the Economic Council of Canada at the time when he was chairman, and I find him to be a man of considerable ability. I wonder what role the representatives of the unions will play in this inquiry. Will they have the right and the privilege of appointing members to this inquiry? This is one of the matters which the minister may wish to clarify.

I want to say to the committee that in the time that I have been a member of the House the men who work on the railroads have expressed a profound dissatisfaction with the administration of the pension fund by the CNR and by the CPR. The CNR of course is owned and run by the people of Canada. If the minister or this government think that they can divorce the matter of pensions from the over-all settlement of this rail dispute, then let me tell them that they are wrong.

Let me point out that in the election of 1972 the railroad workers called a meeting to which they invited all the candidates who stood for nomination in the constituency of Saskatoon-Biggar in that year to appear and talk to them. Let me say, for the information of the Creditiste party members, that one of the nominees who appeared there was a member of their party. I may say that being a Creditiste he would have received no cheers if he had advocated the policy which the members of that party had advocated today in the House. They understood the situation all too well.

These men wanted to know what the pension fund was, what their share in it was, and what their benefits were going to be. They no longer easily accept the idea that they are putting money into a fund which they do not control and, worse than that, of which they do not even have an accounting. They no longer accept that sort of approach. Also, they are far ahead of the management of CNR and CPR in that they know it is not necessary for a man to

[Mr. Munro (Hamilton East).]

work until the age of 65 in what is essentially an arduous occupation. They know that it is not necessary. They know that there is a sufficient work force in Canada for them to be able to take a pension at a younger age if they so wish, and that they should be able to obtain the kind of pension which would give them a decent standard of living. They are not prepared to end their days in poverty.

I say all this to the committee in the hope that some hon. members who are not closely associated with the people who work on the railroads may have a greater understanding of their thinking. This is what the railroad workers are saying to me when I meet them. They should have the right to know what is in their pension fund, and they should have an accounting of how much money is available in it because they are putting money into it. They should have the same rights as has the shareholder in a corporation or in a co-operative.

They should know how much money they have put in, how much is available and what rate of interest it is earning, because it is their money. They are not getting this information. If the Minister of Labour institutes an inquiry and if it is not going to bring to these men on the railroad the information which I have described, he will find that they will not be satisfied. They are very sceptical even of the proposal that was put before the general chairman and which the general chairman recommended to the men working on the railways. They may have to accept it, but I tell you that whether they voice that protest or whether they do not voice it they will accept those recommendations under protest. They wanted to appear before the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications but they did not have the opportunity to do so because the government did not refer the CNR financing bill to the committee in the last session. Why? Why did it not do that. Why did the government not put before the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications the matter of CNR financing, so that it could be examined?

● (2010)

Representatives from the constituency of Saskatoon-Biggar wrote to the chairman of the transport committee, the hon. member for Crowfoot, and asked for the privilege of appearing before that committee. They were never given that opportunity, because the government would not put the CNR financing bill before that committee, and that committee sat in idleness. This government wanted it to sit in idleness.

The government did not want public hearings and an investigation into the financing of one of the largest businesses which the government controls. So, that group of railroaders who spoke for pensioners never had the opportunity to come before that committee and say "This is our problem. This is what we think, and this is what we know." They had even arranged to engage a man who was fully knowledgeable in this matter, but they did not have the opportunity to appear before the committee.

The Minister of Transport may again make impassioned speeches, as he did today, and tell us about the nitty-gritty of negotiations, but he has much to learn about railroad-ing. If the government does not satisfy the demands of the