

rail system through which we can get our products to the market, if we can build hotels and towers in Toronto?

• (2110)

I am looking at the great subsidies that the railways are getting for running their trains. One subsidy totals \$25 million for a train running across the continent. It does not go to central or to northern British Columbia; it goes to Vancouver. It runs along the American border. I am also looking at the subsidies paid on trains running between Toronto and Montreal. Compare that with the maintenance of the branch lines that the railways wish to abandon. Maybe the latter expenditure is big when compared with the commuter trains, but surely in the built-up areas we could model ourselves on the European transportation systems. Maybe we could build an electric train to run between Toronto and Montreal, with a stop at Ottawa. We should concentrate on a new, imaginative system that would carry passengers in all weather conditions without great delays.

These are the kinds of things we should be thinking about, not towers reaching into the sky and things that are out of reach of the ordinary citizen. We should be concentrating on transportation in light of the fact that we are paying \$150 million a year to subsidize the railways. This totals about half the unemployment insurance subsidies that we are paying. If we could put the railways on a paying basis, we could invite twice the number of people to be unemployed in Canada. That should appeal to hon. members across the floor. We could invite another 50,000 people to go on unemployment insurance.

If our railways were placed on a paying basis, we could pay our senior citizens almost \$250 a month. In light of all this, I wonder what people think who are watching the proceedings here when we are asked to support the railways' expenditures on all kinds of things. Do these people really credit us with much sanity? We must reconsider this kind of skullduggery. We have armed the minister with enough power to be able to tell the railways that we are concerned and to tell them what we, the people who have to use the railways, think of this whole deal. The railways must spend this money on things different from those in their present plans.

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Mississauga (Mr. Blenkarn) is attempting to make a significant point in his two motions, namely, that railroads have slowly but surely tended to move away from their basic principle which, ever since early times in this Canada of ours, has been the movement of goods from east to west or west to east, west to our export markets or east to our export markets. The hon. member seeks to reduce expenditures available to the CNR on projects which are far removed from this basic concept. This intent is well worth noting, because we have a Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) who after being in charge of that department for two years has thrown up his hands and said we have no transportation policy. That was an amazing statement for him to make publicly. The minister went to great lengths to blame this on the 1967 National Transportation Act. It suggested that competition should be the guiding factor for transportation within Canada, meaning

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for the movement of goods between the various parts of Canada and to our export markets.

In 1967 I said that competition would not play a major policing role with respect to our railroads. I said in 1967 that the act was wrong. I found it amazing that the Liberal government of that day pushed the act forward as strongly as it could. In fact, at the beginning of the debate on transportation in 1967, many Conservatives also thought that competition would solve our transportation problems. The competition theory arose out of the Royal Commission on Transportation headed by a westerner by the name of MacPherson. Everybody thought that if a westerner accepted the philosophy that transportation could be policed by competition, surely this would solve all the problems. But, Mr. Speaker, it has not been the solution, because really there has been no competition on the prairies between the various modes of transport during the last five years or, for that matter, during the last 55 years.

In the 1967 debate I likened the railway system to a public utility that must be policed and controlled to some extent by government. I well remember insisting on adding the word "adequate" to section 23 of the act. As originally introduced, it called for a sufficient transportation system. I insisted on adding the word "adequate" because to a prairie farmer that has great scope; it means the adequate movement of his produce to export markets. We did not see that adequate movement this past year, and last year was purely an example of years gone by and of years to come.

There must be a public authority to ensure that railroads perform the service for which they were established. In 1967 I argued at length that the "captive shipper" provision would never be used because it would be very difficult to prove a case. I also remember arguing that the public interest provision would only be utilized if provincial governments co-operated. In recent times we had the rapeseed case in which provincial governments banded together, in conjunction with the grain pools, and won their case before the transportation commission. It was a tremendous breakthrough.

Perhaps the act of 1967 was 20 years ahead of its time. I was amazed that initially it was not dealt with more in the House. It was dealt with at length in committee. It was debated all through the month of December. Prominent Conservatives in my party told me it was a good bill, that it was the best we could expect to get. I told them I did not think so and that they would see me here, eating my Christmas dinner in the House of Commons, because I would not let the bill pass before Christmas.

We adjourned on December 23, returned on January 9, and debated the bill every day from January 9 until January 30, or January 31, when it was finally passed but with several amendments suggested by myself and others. Now the Liberal Party say they have changed. They have changed because their front benches have changed. Surely there should have been some kind of guiding principle that they must have believed in at that time and still believe in today, or is it all just political expediency? Can they just go to the public and apologize for these mistakes, saying they are sorry they made the mistakes and asking for forgiveness? That is not good enough for me. They had all the experts over there and they should have had the