

*Supply—Transport*

The answers were:

1. The company's engineering officers in Saskatchewan.

2. No.

I may say that one is a very reasonable and sensible answer.

3. Sewer and water connections are not available on railway property; however, application has been made for an easement through school property to enable connections being made to the town facilities. Approval is expected momentarily and until received, the regular country convenience is being used.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** This is the grassroots.

**Mr. Watson (Assiniboia):** What was that—grassroots, did you say?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I don't think we should pursue the subject.

**Mr. Watson (Assiniboia):** This is where the inefficiency arises. They knew there were no sewer or water connections within 700 feet and no way in which they could possibly hook on to any. It was a legitimate question for any plumber or contractor who wanted to know where to hook on the connections. The C.N.R. officials in the city of Saskatoon were advised of the situation but they completely ignored it. Tenders were called and the facilities were installed. I am advised the contract price was approximately \$1,000, though apparently the department does not divulge such figures. There was no reason in the world for this being installed until arrangement had been made for connections, and as long as we have officials, heads of departments, doing things like this, then God help the people of Canada who are paying subsidies to the railways.

I know only \$1,000 is involved in this case, but \$1,000 multiplied by the number of other places where such things occur constitutes the reason that the people of Canada have to dig in their pockets to pay for this type of absolutely useless facility. I would like the minister to check into this. I do not know why officials of his department and of the C.N.R. let contracts such as this when they are advised of the situation.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** There is a question of principle involved here. It has been the practice since the C.N.R. was first established immediately after the first world war to have the C.N.R. management come to Ottawa and account for their affairs directly to a committee of parliament. The Minister of Transport, or his predecessor the minister of railways, was not to be answerable to parliament for

[Mr. Watson (Assiniboia).]

the internal management of the C.N.R. in the way in which a minister is answerable to parliament for the expenditures of his own department. I think the hon. gentleman might wish to pursue this matter when the management of the C.N.R. next come before our parliamentary committee. Meanwhile I am sure officials of the railway will have read what he has said.

**Mr. Watson (Assiniboia):** I thank the minister for his suggestion, but if I may add one more word, I think this was possibly a mistake which somebody in the department was too proud to admit.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Not the department, the railway.

**Mr. Watson (Assiniboia):** It should have been placed in the station instead of the section house, but I will be pleased to go into the matter on another occasion.

**Mr. Woolliams:** Since the hon. member for Assiniboia has raised the question of the differential in quotas on the C.N.R. and C.P.R., would the minister not admit this afternoon that the situation is such that there are ships waiting empty at the docks in Vancouver because the grain has not been got off the farms in western Canada to the Vancouver docks, and thus we are paying thousands of dollars a day for demurrage so far as those ships are concerned? I may tell him I have a letter from some people in Vancouver to this effect. I hope he will have this in mind when he inquires into the failure of the C.P.R. services to western Canada.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I think the hon. gentleman knows that the Minister of Finance announced the other day that following the meeting which my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, and I, had in the office of the Minister of Finance with the president and the vice president of the C.P.R., we decided to do in Vancouver what, at the instance of the Minister of Finance, who was then Minister of Trade and Commerce, and I did in Winnipeg with respect to the lakehead, in arranging to set up a committee on the spot in Vancouver. We have got Mr. Riddell, a retired, and highly respected member of the Canadian Wheat Board to head that committee, on which will be represented the railways, the Canadian Wheat Board, the elevator companies and everyone concerned with the transit of grain to and through Vancouver, with the committee to meet regularly in order to keep the subject under review and try to end every bottleneck as fast as