

Canadian National Railways Act

what extent does the board of directors supervise the plans before hump yards, presently under construction in Canada, are located and commenced; and I refer particularly to the commencement and construction of the hump yard at Moncton, New Brunswick.

I suggest these are important questions to be answered. They do not only involve management problems but rather policy decisions which result in the spending of hundreds of millions of dollars. I should also like to know the extent to which the board of directors took responsibility for the real estate development that took place last year and is continuing to this date, at Montreal. I should also ask whether that board of directors had the responsibility for the redevelopment at Moncton. As the member of parliament representing that area I welcomed the decision of management to do so, but I wonder about the extent to which the board of directors took part in the planning, leasing, etc.

This bill was the subject of debate on Monday and Tuesday of this week. I hope it will be passed today, and that no time will be lost in passing the required orders in council. I hope at the same time the government, in making the selection of the six new directors, will give serious thought to placing retired C.N.R. employees on this board of directors. I realize that we should have businessmen on the board, however, if working conditions are to improve; and if we are to establish better relations between the public and this crown corporation we must have individuals on the board of directors who know what is wrong. A businessman may have some idea in this regard, as he may be or may become a shipper, but this board of directors must also include retired railway workers who have given a lifetime of service to this crown company.

I have reason to believe that Mr. Gordon is employed at the present time on what can be generally termed as a day to day basis. If I am correct in that belief, perhaps he will agree with my interpretation of this bill; that this is an appropriate time for him to tender his resignation.

Mr. Fisher: Hear, hear.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, if the value of the remarks made by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillington is to be measured by the accuracy of that statement which he ascribed to me, then I suggest he might just as well send word up to *Hansard* to have his remarks of this day taken off the record. He suggested in his speech of yesterday, and I think he repeated

[Mr. Creaghan.]

it today, that I had advocated that if this bill passed, one of the new directors should be appointed from the province of Alberta.

That is not correct. I referred to the region served by the Northern Alberta Railways, and that is an entirely different situation. The Northern Alberta Railways system is a monstrosity created in 1929 by the then Liberal administration. It serves not only the northern half of Alberta, but is the focal point through which freight proceeds from the Northwest Territories into the northeastern part of British Columbia, into the Cariboo district, which is so ably represented by my good friend the hon. member for Cariboo. It now seems possible, if legislation implementing the recommendations of the Manning commission is proceeded with, to have an extension of some 400 miles into the Northwest Territories.

Speaking in regard to representation on a regional basis, I should like to say that I have always felt—particularly with reference to the Canadian National Railways board of directors—there should be regional rather than provincial representation. I related that fact to the recommendations contained in the MacPherson royal commission report, which obviously suggested that the difficulties which the authors of that report had in mind would be vast if there was a measure of change so far as passenger traffic, freight traffic, and diminution of service on a regional basis are concerned.

That was what I had in mind and for that reason I strongly advocate passage of the bill. The railway situation certainly needs attention, and I think that attention might well commence at the top with the administrative processes.

Mr. Pickersgill: If I misinterpreted the hon. member I did so inadvertently and I am quite willing to substitute northern Alberta for Alberta.

Mr. Balcer: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I must inform the house that if the minister speaks now he will close the debate.

Hon. Leon Balcer (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, all through this debate my hon. friends opposite have said repeatedly that this bill is insignificant, unimportant and useless; that it will not help the C.N.R.; that it is a waste of money, and so on. All I can say is that with all these accusations against the bill I think it is only proper that we should have a look at the background of the legislation and try to find out who were the original dreamers, the insignificant people who first conceived this idea.

I have been looking at the report of proceedings of the sessional committee where