

Railways and Shipping Committee

I was in Glasgow, and was fortunate enough to attend the Glasgow industrial exhibition. Whilst there, those who were showing me round the exhibition were very anxious that I should see the railway exhibit, to see what improvements the nationalized railways of England were undertaking. As I was being shown these improvements—and these improvements were very worth while—I was told by the railway official who was showing them to me that they had been made necessary by the denationalization of the motor transport industry in England. This official told me that if the motor transport industry in England had not been denationalized, it would not have been necessary for the railway industry to make any improvements at all, because when the motor transport industry in England was nationalized, there was literally no competition, or certainly no competition of a worrisome nature, for the railways. However, as soon as the motor transport industry became denationalized by the Conservative government, then the motor transport industry began to give the nationalized railway industry very serious competition. These very worth while changes which I was shown by this railway official were, according to him, 100 per cent made necessary because of the competition given the railways by a revitalized, denationalized road transportation system then in existence in the United Kingdom. I think, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Benidickson: Would the minister permit a question?

Mr. Hees: Perhaps I might just finish.

Mr. Fisher: Would the minister permit a question?

Mr. Hees: Yes.

Mr. Fisher: If we accept the logic of the minister's story, and it is a good one, why does he not accept it and give us "deuces wild" competition?

Mr. Hees: The hon. member does not seem to realize that the situation regarding competition faced by the government owned railway in Canada is exactly the same as the very real competition being faced now, and only now, because of the denationalized road transport industry in England. That is one of the reasons the railways in Canada are making improvements daily, and they are doing a very fine job and I am proud to be associated in the way I am with the Canadian National Railways, because that railway is taking very forward steps in keeping itself up to date and is improving itself in every way possible day by day. One of the reasons, as I say, why that is going on is because

[Mr. Hees.]

of the competition which that railway and the railways of Canada are facing from the road transportation industry of this country. It is competition that is providing the Canadian people with better and better services daily in the air, on the water, on our highways and on our railways.

Mr. Benidickson: Mr. Speaker, would the minister comment before six o'clock arrives upon the questioning which was put to him by the hon. member for Port Arthur about terminals at Redditt, Sioux Lookout, Belleville and these other C.N.R. terminal points which are under concern? I know it is almost six o'clock but I think the minister has made no reference to the fact that when the national legislative committee of the international railway brotherhoods made their submission to the cabinet on February 2, I think more than half of their total brief was devoted to the application of section 182 of the Railway Act and present intentions of the C.N.R. and the government. I wonder if the minister will comment on that?

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, obviously there is not time to do so because it is exactly six o'clock but if the hon. member is interested in these matters I am sure he is a member of the committee—

Mr. Benidickson: No, I am not.

Mr. Hees: That is unfortunate, but I am sure the hon. member for Laurier will do his questioning for him and bring him back a very good story on it.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Would the minister permit me simply to point out a very important error in geography. He said that Glasgow was in England. I think he should be reminded that it is in Scotland.

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the ultra-smart ex-minister to task. I said that I went to England last year and was fortunate to attend the exhibition. It is on the same island, as the hon. member knows.

I might add a couple more sentences and say that in dealing with the matter of unemployment the hon. member for Laurier would leave us with the idea that in his day the Liberal government did everything possible for the men laid off on the C.N.R. I have discussed this matter with men from all parts of the country employed on the C.N.R. and they are amazed that the hon. member for Laurier brings this matter up, because they assured me that he and his government in all the years they were in charge of the affairs of this country paid not the slightest attention to or seemed to care in any way for the unemployed on the C.N.R.