

double-crossed, the government has been double-crossed and the people of Canada have been double-crossed because we have a lesser capacity to move grain by rail now than we had at the end of 1972. The railroads have removed more cars from grain movement than the taxpayers have put into it since 1972. We are worse off now in our capability than we were at the end of 1972.

The Canadian Wheat Board has called for the purchase of another 10,000 cars, and they must be put on stream at the rate of 2,000 or 3,000 cars a year starting now. They must be purchased by the railways or by a combination of the railways and the government. But beyond that, hundreds of millions of dollars should be invested in other kinds of railway rolling stock and locomotive power. Over the next ten years we should invest a minimum of \$1 billion a year for ten years just in our railway systems and urban transit systems alone.

The minister talks about \$1 billion, but he forgets to tell the House and the people of Canada that in his books that money is spread out over a period of about eight years. That time frame should be cut in half to get rail lines rebuilt and rehabilitated. The minister should also act immediately to reject the branch line recommendations by the Prairie Rail Action Committee, and not make those communities, grain producers and all the people concerned in the areas affected go through this exercise for the third time around. They have gone through this exercise with the Hall commission, with PRAC, and now they have to go through it again with the Canadian Transport Commission.

The chairman of the Prairie Rail Action Committee has said that it is always cheaper to truck grain on light density lines than it is on high density lines. I do not grant that that statement is true because there are even exceptions on light density lines. I wish that the minister and the Prairie Rail Action Committee would explain their recommendation to abandon hundreds of miles of high density track, which amounts to as much movement as 110,000 to 120,000 bushels per mile of track.

The Minister of Transport tells us that this is getting rid of the uncertainty and that it will rationalize and make more efficient our rail system in the prairies, but the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board says that we are going to have to increase production—and he is right because the Canadian Wheat Board has said it—by another ten million tonnes by 1985. That means that the rail lines which the Prairie Rail Action Committee recommends should be abandoned will be high density lines, and all of them need to be retained. Not one of those abandonments should be proceeded with.

I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that our grain producers can reach that level of increased production and that our farmer-owned elevator companies can handle it. The expansion at the ports of Vancouver and Prince Rupert will be able to handle it, but our rail system cannot handle it. Taking up track is no way to improve our handling capacity.

The Prairie Rail Action Committee exceeded its terms of reference in two instances. It recommended the abandonment

of the Lewvan subdivision, about 107 miles of track, which the Hall commission recommended should be put in the basic network and which the minister did put in the basic network. The Lewvan subdivision is none of PRAC's business. They have no business whatsoever recommending the abandonment of a line in the basic network. Their terms of reference ask them to look at the role of lines in the basic network and that is all. The minister had better reject that abandonment recommendation out of hand.

PRAC also exceeded its terms of reference when in its reports it repeatedly referred to competition. There is nothing in its terms of reference which allows them to use the criteria of competition in arriving at their recommendations. The Prairie Rail Action Committee had no business butting in. If the competition is needed it will be the grain producers who will decide and the grain companies. We do not need this outrageous attempt by the Prairie Rail Action Committee to manipulate grain companies.

I find it strange that most of their abandonment recommendations are on lines where the large majority of elevators are owned by the farmers themselves. The minister had better reject all those applications. The minister says that the CTC can make a final decision on a line. That is not so. The federal government can put any line it wants into the basic network. The minister could do it tomorrow by order in council. If the CTC rejects an abandonment application by the railroads, they must review that line within every five years and uncertainty remains. I have had no guarantee or commitment from the minister that where the CTC rejects an abandonment recommendation by PRAC he will put it into the basic network.

Mr. Lang: You missed it.

Mr. Benjamin: If he said that, Mr. Speaker, then I am happy. But why will he not put those PRAC lines into the basic network without having to go through the CTC hearings?

I move, seconded by the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom):

That the motion be amended by adding at the end thereof the following words:

(7) to implement the Hall royal commission report recommendations with regard to statutory rates;

(8) to ensure that transportation be used as an instrument of national policy rather than an instrument to make profits.

The minister still has time to put into gear the funding and the policies necessary to implement what is needed for transportation in Canada.

In closing, I would like to make a brief reference to my own constituency and ask the minister to please get something done about the situation in Regina with regard to a number of areas. We are sick and tired of being treated like a backwoods village. The airport was congested enough with two airlines in and out plus the private aircraft, but now the minister has put a third airline in there. There was not room for two. Now there is congestion every day and the nonsense of forcing passengers on charter flights to land in Regina, fly on to Calgary to clear