

second. He said we have to move away from a preoccupation with the corporate interests supplying the services and put the onus back on the people. He also said that decisions to close community rail lines or make other changes in service cannot be dictated from on high. Well, glory hallelujah is all I can say. What a great day has arisen.

It is this same Minister, Mr. Speaker, who sat on the major Cabinet committees which authorized the dismantlement of 20 per cent of the rail passenger service in this country. I wonder in whose interest he was acting at that time. That is the kind of double standard and hypocrisy we hear from this Minister. The transportation of dangerous goods is too important to be used as a political volleyball. It became very prominent in this country following the Mississauga incident and the action that we as a Government took back in 1979 in calling for a full-scale inquiry, the Grange Commission, which was really the most objective and thorough way in which we could have dealt with that matter.

There is an Act in place covering the transportation of dangerous goods. There are regulations flowing that are very voluminous in nature, very complex, very expensive to comply with and excessively bureaucratic. There are differences of opinion between the industry and those who are domiciled along the corridor. There is a genuine fear, and this matter has to be dealt with in a realistic and practical fashion. There is a question of reciprocity with the United States of America and the regulations that apply there.

● (1825)

The fact of the matter is that we have a growing number of accidents involving the use of dangerous goods. In 1982 there were 170 major rail accidents involving hazardous products. In 1983 there were 159 major accidents. In 1982 there were 91 minor accidents and 323 minor accidents in 1983. Those are CTC figures, Mr. Speaker. The matter is not improving, it is getting worse. This Minister is failing to act. He is making political speeches, grandstanding and jockeying. He is on the bandstand of anything that is politically attractive. However, he has not delivered. The fact of the matter is that he can take some very positive and definitive initiatives with respect to reduction of speed. He can take some very positive initiatives with respect to the treatment of empty tank cars. He can take a positive initiative with respect to the proper identification of cars that carry dangerous goods. So far he has failed to do anything. I call upon the Minister to live up to his commitments. I call upon the Minister to put the railways on the spot and make them deliver. This issue is far too important for the Minister to engage in this kind of political jockeying.

[Translation]

Mrs. Éva Côté (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say very briefly that I

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do not agree with the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski), who said that the present Minister of Transport (Mr. Axworthy) is elusive and shifty. I would rather say that he has taken very good decisions that are in the best interests of all Canadians.

As to the question put by the Hon. Member for Vegreville regarding the transportation of dangerous goods, the document referred to by the Hon. Member was prepared by the Department's service of transport of dangerous goods and includes recommendations made by M-Trac as well as the reply by the railroads. Lack of time prevented the Department from checking or controlling the data contained in this report. Only 40 copies of the report were printed and it has had a very limited distribution. However, a copy was sent to the office of the Hon. Member for Vegreville.

The Office of the Inspector General of Security in Transport was given the mandate to review the whole matter of the transportation of dangerous goods, and this review is already under way. The Inspector General has undertaken a study of all documentation in this field and he also attended a recent meeting between the Minister and the M-Trac group to hear representations on some aspects of the matter.

Discussions were also held in Toronto with representatives of CP Rail who provided a guided tour of the rail facilities in the Metropolitan Toronto area. As soon as the review is completed, Mr. Speaker, and when all concerned groups have made representations, this information will be assessed and a report with recommendations will be submitted to the Minister.

As regards the very strict measures taken concerning an incident at the McMillan Station in north-west Toronto, involving a rail car containing either butane, propane or anhydrous ammoniac, the Railway Transport Committee of the Canadian Transport Commission has just ordered today that 26 tank cars be taken out of service due to possible defects. However, an inquiry has been launched concerning this incident which happened in Toronto; this inquiry is continuing and will be pursued until all details are known about these cars which have been taken out of service because of possible manufacturing defects.

Mr. Speaker, I believe, that these comments should provide a satisfactory answer to the question put by my colleague from Vegreville.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

At 6.30 p.m., the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.