

Railway Rights-of-Way

custom grew up in the days of the steamers and passenger trains across the country. Perhaps she is right and those things should have gone. But they did not go as an economy measure, rather as a symbol of their decision to end the whole passenger service and the facility for which we had provided the assets.

Not long ago I made a presentation to the Canadian Transport Commission which was considering whether Canadian National should be allowed to drop its line from Toronto to North Bay. I wholeheartedly supported the proposition to drop the passenger service, and indeed I went further and supported the idea of dropping the line from Toronto to North Bay. The service has been so bad on that line that passengers have given up, but everyone looked askance at me because everyone knew that there had to be rail transportation from North Bay to Toronto. In applying to drop that service their idea was that the public would pick up the cost of the line, that people would say, "If you do not drop it we will pay all the operating losses and expenses." In effect that is what they wanted, and that is an abuse.

If the Kettle Valley Railway is going to be nationalized, and even if they take up the rails and drive cars along the rail bed, I think Mr. Herridge, who used to represent one of the Kootenay ridings, would be very surprised at his friends for advocating that. He did not get much support in the years he advocated it being nationalized and used for the common good.

I wholeheartedly support the argument because we gave the ground for these transportation corridors, and we have the right to take it back if it is not being used for the correct purpose. I would think there would be some in my party who would not go so far as to say we should take away the 640 acres on both sides of the line; some of my colleagues may own some of that for all I know. I am not just too sure what that would involve, so I am not sure that I would go quite that far. Maybe I am not as far to the left as some of my colleagues in other parties. I would certainly go so far as to say that where the facility is abandoned we should retain the corridor for which we gave them that grant.

● (1642)

It seems to me that it is very interesting that the railways got all the best corridors through the mountains. In fact they got the only way you could ride through with a horse even in the early days. They looked for the only way to get through the mountains and built a railroad on it. Since then we have tried to get over those mountains and, as my friends have said, we have had to fly over them, there is no other way through them. So if you are going to take the rail line out and eliminate the possibility of hauling passengers, at least let us drive our cars through on that right-of-way, and I wholly support this.

I would have to look at the ramifications. This is the kind of speech my Conservative colleagues usually make. They would have to look at all the ramifications of the nationalization of the Canadian Pacific in the light of accomplishing this particular purpose of retaining rights-of-way. I don't know whether in the end it would be wise to take away their steamboats, their

[Mr. Peters.]

airplanes, mines, factories, their connections with television and satellites in the sky and all the other things in which they are involved. But I am very pleased that the hon. member from the Kootenays, and the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. Holt) lived up to the traditions that have been long established in both of their ridings by socialist predecessors in wanting to nationalize the Canadian Pacific Railway. Even this small step will make the former members, one from Kootenay East and the other from Vancouver-Kingsway, very happy I am sure, and I hope we can support it for their sake as well as for those who remain.

Hon. Martin O'Connell (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the motion before us, and to do it briefly. I think there is another aspect of it which ought to be brought forward. The purpose of the motion is to provide for the reversion to the Crown of railway rights-of-way which have been abandoned, if those rights of rights-of-way had been acquired in the first instance through a subsidy procedure for the building and operation of the railways.

It seems to me, following the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters), that reversion to the Crown would not indeed ensure that those rights-of-way were retained as rights-of-way for possible future transportation corridors. I took that to be one of the purposes the hon. member for Okanagan Boundary (Mr. Whittaker) put forth. In fact they might well be disposed of, but there is no provision in this motion which would ensure that any proceeds from a disposal would go back into the operation of the railway. I think there are further refinements of this whole procedure which are worth pursuing.

I want to say to the hon. member for Okanagan Boundary that I, too, support the basic principle involved in his motion. I think it is a very sound one. I would prefer to support his Bill C-222 which is coming up, possibly before we recess at Christmas, because in doing so we would get that bill over to committee and then we can look at all the ramifications that really arise. My friend from Timiskaming said he would like to look at the ramifications. He appropriated what he thought were the socialist inclinations of previous speakers, but he abandoned them very soon afterwards by going to a Conservative position. If he wants to maintain both positions it would be better to send the bill, coming soon, to the committee.

An hon. Member: Nationalize Bell at the same time.

Mr. O'Connell: I know the NDP want to nationalize Bell Canada, but I want to say to them they are exceptionally wrong in this particular case of Bell Canada—and not to divert from our bill in front of us—Mr. Speaker, the government to a very large extent accepts the principle in the motion.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. O'Connell: I am not speaking for the government in an official sense, but I want to read what the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) has said recently which would lead me to the conclusion that the government supports the basic principle in a specific instance. We all know that the Hall Royal Commis-