

United Transportation Union's publication "*Unity through Progress*"

In 1944 railroads in Canada registered about 6.8 billion passenger miles; in 1968, the figure was down to about 2.6 billion. Last November, the CNR and CP Rail filed 31 applications with the Canadian Transport Commission seeking relief from the burden of uneconomic passenger trains.

They claim they are uneconomical. In terms of public policy this would appear to be absolute madness at a time when 85 per cent of North American interurban transportation is carried out by automobiles; and at a time when it is a demonstrable fact that the automobile is one of the major sources of environmental pollution. Surely, any sane government would be bending every effort in seeking ways and means of encouraging the public to abandon the use of automobiles in favour of public transportation in order to reduce both pollution and the high costs in terms of money and social side effects of the construction of more freeways to accommodate automobiles. Instead, our government appears to be ready, for example, to allow the railroads to downgrade the passenger service between Ottawa and Montreal, something which can only result in the increased use of automobiles and increased expenditures on highways.

• (4:10 p.m.)

What we need in this country is a national transportation system, the first priority of which would be to meet the requirements of the country, both in terms of present needs and in terms of the demands of future development, not one designed in principle to meet the demands of an accountant's ledger. We need that kind of transportation system, and it is necessary that the government begin action to create it immediately. All protestations of government members to the contrary, there is no such animal yet extant.

Mr. Charles Turner (London East): Mr. Speaker, each year the government of this nation introduces a bill for CNR financing and capital expenditures for the year. The chiefs walk in with cap in hand, hon. members of this House fill the cap, and then the chiefs return to their head office to calculate how much service they can eliminate. It is high time that the members of this House and the government of this country stopped writing the CNR a blank cheque. It is time we asked for a full report on what the CNR does with all their money.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Turner (London East): As one who has spent over 30 years of his life in the railroad business, I can tell you in a few words what is the matter with the CNR—too many highly paid chiefs and not enough little Indians, and most of the chiefs know nothing about running a railroad. During the war years when railroad men worked 14, 16 and 18 hours a day, we had few bosses. If you had occasion to meet the boss, he was usually running around the country with a pair of pliers and a length of wire trying to keep locomotives in good repair. But when the boss caught up with you, usually you found you had done something wrong. He wanted to give you a

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good tongue lashing and a few demerits, then send you on your way.

Employees had the highest respect for their bosses who knew their job. The latter also knew their respective employees' jobs, and the men knew that when they went into the office for an investigation they would get a square deal. Today, the morale is so low it will never recover. Why is it that most of the middle management bosses have retired at the age of 60, and why is it that most of the middle management bosses today can hardly wait for their pension time to arrive? There is something wrong when employees are unhappy about their working conditions. There is definitely something wrong when many bosses are waiting for their retirement.

Recently we had a wildcat strike at Fort Erie, Ontario, and a few weeks ago we averted a wildcat strike at London, Ontario. Both these strikes were the result of CNR trying to force a change on the employees without prior consultation. CNR employees are sick and tired of these high-handed methods of change without notice, without talking to the union officials. There is no dialogue, no meaningful co-operation in the CNR. The management just moves the hatchet men in and bulldozes the employees into submission. I, personally, know hundreds of the employees and I can honestly say they are not easily stirred up. However, these new methods of trying to make the employees submit without prior talks will not work. Employees wish to be treated with common sense and they want management to prove to them that the changes are necessary to improve the service. They are always ready to co-operate but not when the CN uses the methods which are employed today.

As a former railway engineer I have operated passenger and freight trains over all CNR lines west of Toronto. During my 30 years of service I have watched how the company eliminated service and downgraded the passenger service. First, the service is run late so that mailmen complain and the mail contract is lost. In most small towns the express is delivered in the morning, but if the train is late the express man has to deliver his parcels well into the afternoon and then starts to pick up his shipments to go into the big cities on the afternoon train. If he cannot finish his route in the morning, he leaves the express until the next day. Therefore, a day's delay results in the shipping of express. The shippers get angry and find other ways of shipping their goods, so the express business is lost. Then, the railway can show the Canadian Transport Commission that the train is losing money, and the CTC rubber stamps the application of the railway so the train is eliminated.

Mr. McGrath: That's what happened to the "Bullet".

Mr. Turner (London East): If you ride some of the passenger trains between Toronto and Ottawa, you find you cannot even buy a lunch or get a drink of water because so many of the employees have been laid off the company does not have the workers to do the job. The car windows are dirty and so are the coaches. I have talked to many of the track workers and they have told me that even if they had the supplies they could not keep