

Supply—Transport

our taking over Canadian Pacific Railway, but why should we? Why should we not take Canadian National Railways and decide to make it the operating railway to supply all passenger transportation in Canada?

I think the minister will find that if many people want their freight shipments to go on the same line, Canadian Pacific will have to do some scratching, which they are not doing at the present time. I believe the minister is a very capable man. I have had the opportunity of observing many of the things he has done in the past five or six years. Some of them I have agreed with and some I have disagreed with. His capabilities are certainly about the average of those of his colleagues in the cabinet.

Some hon. Members: Oh, Oh.

Mr. Starr: That has really pulled the minister down.

Mr. Peters: It seems to me that if anybody is to make an impression on this department, it should be the minister. He asked for this department.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Peters: Perhaps this is why we have the quandary that faces us at the moment, because I think the minister has the necessary capabilities. In my opinion this is a field in which a serious contribution has to be made. I think the day has arrived when we must make a decision as to what we are going to do to keep the people of Canada united as far as travelling across the nation is concerned.

The fuss that was raised with regard to the run between Ottawa and Toronto was not really caused by the people of Canada but by Members of Parliament. They had decided that if better accommodation was not provided for them, the roof was going to blow off. Members of parliament expressed the opinion that an improvement was to be made nationally, too, and they were in the mood to have the minister stand up and ask that a committee be established to look into the question of passenger service in Canada.

Let us face this problem and do something about it. If we have to subsidize the railways, let us subsidize them. Let us bring this question out in the open and ask the Canadian public what they wish done about it. I think it is a disgrace that we give Canadian Pacific equal rights with Canadian National in terms of freight hauled; yet the

Board of Transport Commissioners has allowed Canadian Pacific Railway to double their passenger fare on the run between North Bay and Ottawa. I have checked this, Mr. Chairman, and the Canadian Pacific fare is almost double that of Canadian National.

We have allowed Canadian Pacific to do this while at the same time being well aware of the end result. You do something to get rid of the passengers and then come before the board and say: "Look, we have no passengers". I can assure the committee that anybody who rides on Canadian National train 104 is not a passenger in the true sense of the word. They travel on this train because it is an emergency and they have to get from one point to another. This is the only way it can be done. It is not a comfortable way; it is not a cheap way; it is not in any way a good way of travelling but it is simply a way of getting from one point to another. As far as I am concerned, if they took the damned thing off it would suit me just as well, because I will be able to ride in the caboose on the pass of a member of parliament and would be just as comfortable sleeping in one of the workers' bunks as in one of the coaches provided on this passenger service which is producing revenue. I do not want to beat a dead horse, and it is a dead horse.

An hon. Member: Do you mean the minister?

Mr. Peters: I do not mean the minister; I mean the whole transportation problem that faces parliament. There is a general agreement in this respect and if there were a free vote on whether to set up a transportation committee to study policy, I am sure it would be set up tomorrow. However, the committee will become bogged down with these estimates and will not be able to get around to solving this problem.

The minister will have to give leadership in this regard. I believe Canada has reached the halfway mark as far as transportation is concerned and should turn over to a completely new type of passenger transportation system and scrap the old one. I believe everyone agrees that we have reached this stage.

What burns me up is that we have the Board of Transport Commissioners who do not seem to do anything. They do not even seem to ride on these trains; I have not seen one of them riding on the trains for a long time. I do not really know what they do.

Mr. Nielsen: They go by Air Canada.