

*Canadian National Railways*

harbour and take advantage of the strategic position we have as the service station of the Atlantic, so as to maintain full employment there all the year round and, indeed, to increase employment thereby improving the economic position of the area as a whole.

I am not satisfied with what is happening in my province with regard to Canadian National; I am not satisfied with what is happening in Canada. I get the impression that the only role a member of Parliament has to play with regard to Canadian National is as a rubber stamp when they come to this House asking for financial assistance. But when it comes to representations for a better service or for a service to be maintained, our pleas fall on deaf ears. I do not enjoy being a rubber stamp. I think the railway company has a responsibility to pay more attention to our pleas in this House. When we make a legitimate complaint or a considered suggestion, I believe it is incumbent on the company to study that complaint or suggestion and, if possible, to implement it.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

• (9:50 p.m.)

**Mr. Carter:** I am not too happy with the method Canadian National is using in the city of St. John's to dispose of damaged goods arriving at the terminal. I am sure I echo the views of a large number of people, especially CN employees, when I say that a new system should be devised instead of the present monopolistic method of disposal. These goods in the course of a year amount to a very considerable sum and should be disposed of in a more equitable way than at present.

In closing, I strongly suggest that the minister appear before the committee where we shall have a lot of question to ask him. As my colleague from St. John's East has already said, we shall be asking him questions in relation to Hotel Newfoundland, CN coastal services in the province, their bus passenger service and other aspects of their operations in our province, indeed in all of Canada.

**Mr. William Knowles (Norfolk-Haldimand):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to take part briefly in this debate. I shall keep my eye on the clock and I assure the government House leader that I will leave time for the second reading that he is so anxious this bill should receive. Bill C-186 provides financial assistance for the operations of CNR. One of the operations that will be financed is the servocentre program and I rise to speak about this since it vitally affects parts of the area I represent. A new servocentre is to be established in the city of Brantford and will serve my area. When this centre is completely in operation, all the present station facilities at Courtland, Delhi, Simcoe, Jarvis, Cayuga, Hagersville and Caledonia will be discontinued, with consequent loss of employment.

The first concern I have is for the quality of service that will be available to municipalities formerly served by these stations. Much has been said this evening about computers. The servocentre is to be a streamlined service, much of the work being done by computers. A few nights ago one member of the House spoke about results

[Mr. Carter.]

produced by computers, which were pretty well summed up in the phrase "Gigi", which means "Garbage in-garbage out". In view of the results produced by the computer of the Unemployment Insurance Commission, I am sure we would all agree that a great deal of garbage comes out. Members on both sides of the House are continually trying to unravel the mistakes made by this computer. I have the same reservations about a computer that will allocate railway cars and answer questions asked by people using railway facilities in the area about which I have just spoken.

Station masters, station agents and assistants will no longer be employed and thus passengers will be robbed of the personal touch. After all, who can better solve passengers' problems than the man on the job who is familiar with local situations? Now these problems will be solved by a clerk sitting in an office in Brantford, 25 to 30 miles away, and one can imagine the snafu that will result when he tries to locate a railway car that should have been let off at the town of Delhi but ends up at Caledonia, 40 miles away. We can all see the shipper concerned biting his nails, wanting to get the car loaded and his product on its way.

The other cause for concern is the fate of the men who will be displaced by this new program. We want to know what is going to happen to the railway station agents. Will they, as I asked the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) a few days ago during the question period, retain their seniority, their pension privileges and so on? I suppose the answer will be yes, that work will be found for them somewhere. But let us remember that they have established homes in the municipalities they now serve. These men are going to be asked to drive up to 40 miles to sit at a desk if they want to retain their employment with CN. These are the two problems I see arising from the servocentre program: first, the quality of service to the community; second, the effect of the program on present employees.

**Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) said to me that if I can convince the House, and particularly the chairman of the Canadian Transport Commission, that rail transportation is still a realistic and basic ingredient of the transportation system of this country, I should run for the leadership of my party.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Skoberg:** As long as the present incumbent is chairman of the commission, I realize that this would be impossible. With that I take my seat.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** On division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications.