

The Address—Mr. Whiting

Mr. Whiting: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and hon. members.

Officials of the Department of the Minister of National Health and Welfare went there and proved conclusively that the CNR was the cause of pollution and, Mr. Speaker, the matter is being rectified. The question I want to ask is: Why is it that the CNR in so many cases has to be pushed, has to be goaded, has to be pressured into rectifying such matters? Why do they not say, "Yes, we are the cause of this problem. We readily admit it. We are sorry and we will do something about it." But no, they adopt this belligerent attitude time after time.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think the most classic example of CNR bureaucracy took place in the town of Acton. This town is now virtually without railroad service emanating from it. The service has been transferred to the city of Guelph. The methods employed by the CNR to deprive this community of railroad service should be enunciated. Trains that used to stop at Acton now whistle right by. This means that anybody wanting to get on a train or off a train at Acton can no longer do so. This means that freight and express have to be picked up elsewhere, in Guelph. Then the CNR moved in and took out the telegraph service—

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Whiting:—leaving the town virtually without railroad service. But they had an agent in Acton, Mr. Speaker, and he had very little to do. Quite obviously, if there were no trains stopping there and no services to perform, what could he do? Well, Mr. Speaker, he had a telephone, and then they came and took his telephone out. Then, Mr. Speaker, they made application to the Canadian Transport Commission to remove the agent from Acton.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whiting: He had nothing to do, and this was the first time that the people of Acton had any meaningful way to present their case against the injustices done by the CNR. We had a hearing in Acton last January and the pseudo-experts of the CNR, armed with their slide rules and brief cases bulging with data, much of it irrelevant, arrived there, and we put up a battle. I thought we put up a good battle, but when the ruling came down from the Transport Commission, Acton was without railroad service.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Whiting: They upheld the CNR.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

● (12:20 p.m.)

Mr. Whiting: After this ruling came down I could see just what would happen. The CNR flexed their muscles and said, "We won, we won. Now let us go and take away passenger service from Guelph to Toronto". This would deprive Georgetown, a town of some 16,000

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

people, of passenger service. Hearings were held in the city of Guelph which were attended by many members from both sides of this House. We worked together in trying to convince the Canadian Transport Commission that this should not be done. Strange as it may seem, the commissioners in this case said to the CNR: Whoa, hold it; you can just go so far in this matter. And they ordered the CNR not only to continue passenger service from Guelph to Toronto but to update the service and bring it into this part of the twentieth century. This is what I want to urge the CNR to do. The CNR should bring its passenger service from Toronto to Guelph up to date.

The coaches they are using are of early twentieth century vintage. They are drafty, dirty and uncomfortable. In no way would anybody ride in these coaches if they did not have to.

If the CNR would look on passenger service as a means of conveying people and as a money-maker and would tailor the service to that need by running trains at proper hours, I think we would see a great change in the financial picture regarding passenger services. I believe and I have advocated on more than one occasion in the House that the time has come when we must develop a national transportation policy in this country. We cannot have our railroads closing down lines indiscriminately. We must look at the broad picture because the railroads did a great job in building this country. They still have an important role to play in the further development of Canada.

I thank hon. members for allowing me to go over my time. I know this is a subject which concerns many and I urge the government to act on my suggestions and the suggestions made by others. We should adopt a national rail policy and bring the CNR, this Crown corporation, closer to Parliament. We could then have more to say about its operation. This could be done if at least one Member of Parliament were appointed to the board of directors of this Crown corporation.

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, in the concluding days of the debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne I appreciate having the opportunity to say a few words. At the risk of being repetitious, but I hope not redundant, I should like to congratulate the mover of the address, the hon. member for Bourassa (Mr. Trudel), and the seconder, the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Douglas). They can now join that great fraternity of movers and seconders who have taken their place in this great chamber down through the history of Canada.

I propose to make a comparison between the first Speech from the Throne and the last Speech from the Throne I have heard in this place. I have heard about 15 Speeches from the Throne since I have been a member of this House, and I think it would be wise for us to take a minute or two to look at the first Speech from the Throne I heard in 1957. I might say that it is only two columns in length compared with the five columns of the speech we are debating today. With the new format of