

Railway Act

east and west Kootenays in the province of British Columbia, concerning the curtailment of railway services."

I might explain at that point that this brief received unanimous endorsement at a conference in Nelson of representatives of the trade unions in Kootenay east and west just prior to my leaving for Ottawa.

"We have appealed to the provincial government, and Mr. Wicks, who serves in the dual capacity of minister of labour and railways, has advised us to place the matter before the federal authorities. This we suspect as being more in the spirit of buck-passing than in any genuine interest of helping resolve our problems.

As is generally well known throughout the entire world, the east and west Kootenay, whilst not too heavily populated, is rich and valuable in readily available natural resources. By comparison with the hundreds of workmen who produce the primary and raw materials from this rich area, thousands of jobs are made possible in the manufacturing and processing industries of the North American continent originating from rich resources of the bountiful Kootenays.

One company alone, namely the C.M. and S., which is the major base metal producer of the area in the year 1956 handled a total of 2½ million tons of freight, incoming and outgoing, from its Trail plants. The Sullivan mine at Kimberley, the Bluebell mine at Riondel, and the H.B. mine at Salmo also would make substantial additions to that figure. Many other producing mining companies operate in the Kootenays as well.

Tons of Material

Over the rail lines into and out of the Kootenays flow millions of tons of ores, concentrates, base metals and precious metals, as well as fertilizers, both in solid and liquid forms, to say nothing of the vast supplies of machinery and equipment necessary to supply this flourishing industry.

The west Kootenay is also the centre of a rich and substantial logging, lumber and forest products industry. One of the largest match companies in the world, the Eddy match company, have just recently acquired holdings in the area, which speaks well of the Kootenays as a producer of valuable wood and forest products.

Certainly no one can deny that in the 50 or 60 years since the C.P.R. rail through the Kootenays was established, the steady growing revenue through the increased productivity of the whole area has been a source of considerable satisfaction to the one Canadian railway company that holds the trans-Canada rail monopoly in this area.

C.P.R. Service

Accompanying the general increase over the years in the volume of freight, it is safe to say that there has been a considerable reduction in passenger service, and, whilst to some extent the general trend of public travel has been to individual vehicular traffic, this union will always insist, and does so now, that adequate rail service should be provided at all times."

I might say that in this respect the union is supported by all people and all organizations in the district I have the honour to represent.

"This is probably more necessary during the winter months when mountain conditions force many people to rely on the railway for transportation. It is many years now since rail passenger service was completely discontinued into sideline

points such as Rossland, Trail, Slovan valley, etc. Main line passenger service, however, is an entirely different matter.

In November of 1957, and apparently with the blessing of the ministry of transport, the C.P.R. summarily removed sleeping and dining car facilities for travel to and from the Kootenay area. We claim this is a rank injustice and that the Minister of Transport should require them to re-establish the former service. We do so for the following reasons:"

When that was written the union over-estimated the minister's powers according to the law, and has since found the matter was not quite as they thought at that time.

Considerable numbers of people, both adults and children, are forced to travel to the larger centres, Calgary or Vancouver, for specialized medical and surgical treatment. To these people, railway facilities present the only opportunity for travel as bed patients on a daily seven days per week basis, air line travel being not only uncertain, but in some cases not suitable for an ailing person. All other possibilities such as road travel are too severe a hardship for such unfortunates.

In this respect I might say that during last winter I believe planes where unable to land in my constituency for a period of not less than 80 days.

"Need Man Here

The workmen's compensation board of B.C., despite this union's efforts to have an examining office stationed in the interior, still requires all those in need of special examination or treatment among their claimants to travel to Vancouver.

A similar situation confronts the disabled veteran who is obliged to enter the Shaughnessy military hospital at Vancouver and who heretofore could also travel in the relative comfort which the C.P.R. alone has been, and is, in a position to provide. We urge you, sir, to make this a responsibility of this company and to order the immediate resumption of sleeper and dining car service."

In that respect I would mention that I know of one or two cases of veterans who were seriously ill and whose transportation to the coast had to be delayed because it was not possible to use this service.

"In January of this year, ostensibly to protect the train crews and the public from alleged Doukhobor bombings, a further reduction in service was brought about when the daily passenger run was reduced to two days per week, each way. Although this union is as concerned with the safety of the railroad workers and the general public as any other group, we are not convinced that this severe cut in service is warranted."

I might mention that the railroad workers wholeheartedly endorsed this brief and its presentation to the minister.

"Possibly because of an incident of some years ago when an employee or agent of the railway company was implicated in a terrorist act, many people suspect that all of the uproar and suspicion attached to the Sons of Freedom sect of the Doukhobors is mere subterfuge and that they are being used as a convenient excuse that at this time suits the economic outlook of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

In this connection, it is worth observation that there has been no reduction in the pay load traffic