

Provision of Moneys to CNR and Air Canada

as at Edmonton, but I have known examples on the CPR system where people have dialed the Zenith number and have not been able to obtain an answer or have had to wait an inordinately long time to obtain an answer to their call. Personal contact is removed, and while some attempt will be made through the customer service supervisors to maintain a level of personal contact, I suggest that on the basis established by the railway they will not be able to provide an adequate level of service.

I have not had an opportunity to study in detail or at length the full plan of operations for the Saskatoon master agency as it was attached to their application, but I know that they are suggesting that express services be handled in large part through their trucking operations which of course take advantage of new developments in technology and services. I also note that it is planned to have on hand representatives in many of the places which have been served by railway agents working on a full-time basis in the past. I suggest that in many cases this will not be adequate. I note, for example, that in a number of instances there are already on hand representatives at various local points, people who are operating a local store. In some cases this may be the only outlet and the only person available to provide this type of service and to act as a local representative, but when there are a number of businesses in a locality, certainly if there is another store in the community, I imagine they would not want to go to their competitor in order to pick up their express deliveries, so that certainly an independent representative or agent should be located at some point. Thus, it seems to me that more attention must be paid to the provision of an adequate level of local services in these communities and centres where it is proposed to withdraw the station agent who has been there for many years.

With respect to the matter of service, I also note that claims and tracing will be handled through Saskatoon via the Zenith telephone system. Again, it seems to me that this would be inadequate. I have had some experience of this system because I worked in the railway freight operation for several years. I know that many customers of the railway who receive merchandise and goods and who have a claim, want to have it looked after right away and want the service to be provided immediately or very soon. There are very good and valid reasons for wanting the service to be provided immediately. If all claims

[Mr. Burton.]

and tracings are to be handled through Saskatoon, it seems to me, the service provided will be rather inadequate. I could go on to a number of other aspects of the operation as it is proposed under the new master agency plan. As I indicated, I think there is some potential for improved service in the new plan if it is implemented properly and if it is put into effect adequately. But it seems to me that for many centres in the province which are at some distance from the larger, more central, locations, more attention needs to be paid to ensuring the provision of an adequate level of local community service. As I indicated, it was only because of these two developments which came to my attention since the beginning of the debate on the main motion that I decided I should also speak at this time in the debate.

In conclusion, I noted earlier in the day during the question period that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford) complained that he was not able to get some of his business before the House because six or seven days had been used in debating this bill on CNR financing. Of course, as usual, the minister had his facts wrong. This is becoming rather habitual with the minister in terms of the whole operation of his department. Up to that time the bill had been debated for only four days. Certainly it is an extended debate and a rather longer-than-expected debate for some members on the other side of the House. I think it has been shown that there are legitimate areas of concern which require debate.

● (5:30 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that this debate has been worth while in view of the motion which was agreed to earlier today to have the subjects of Canadian National Railways' financial structure and the CNR pension fund referred to the transportation committee for further study. So far as I am concerned, it means that this debate has served a very useful purpose and will in future years be of great value to the people of Canada. I hope that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs as well as other members will recognize this fact as we proceed with the business of the House.

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. I understand there have been consultations amongst the parties of the House and as a result there has been unanimous agreement that the motion for second reading of the bill be changed to provide that after second reading the bill would go