

the CP have been concentrating their efforts on profit-earning freight traffic.

I know full well that the CN freight service is profitable along the Gaspé shore, and elsewhere. In the face of such facts, one would be inclined to ask: Why then should this service be cut down since it is profitable? To that the authorities reply that it would be unfair, for freight customers and, generally, for the population, to make up the deficits of the passenger service with the profits of the freight service. Freight costs would then have to be increased; this would finally be detrimental to the consumers whose already high cost of living would go up further.

To give an idea of what that deficit represents, I shall refer to a document put out by the Transport Commission, dated February 25, 1972 and entitled "Passenger service in the Maritimes". It seems that when the CN speak of the Maritimes, they include the Gaspé Peninsula. The study of the commission on cost prices mentions the possibility for the railroad of maintaining its operation. Deo gratias! That study establishes that the railroads lost \$14,834,298 in 1970, through providing passenger service in the Maritimes and the Gaspé Peninsula. Those figures are rather impressive and no less eloquent.

The act of Parliament alluded to a while ago provides for operations at a loss—and this is one—by allowing federal Treasury subsidies of up to 80 per cent of the true losses. Some hon. members will recall the stormy sittings of the railway committee a few years ago, when the annual reports of the CN were studied and considerable losses were reported which Parliament was asked to make up. They will also recall the bitter remarks addressed to the officials. There are some who object to the granting of subsidies to make up 80 per cent of the losses incurred by the passenger service in the Maritimes and the Gaspé Peninsula.

I know less about the transportation problems in the Maritimes, but being aware of those in Gaspé, I say it is the duty of the state, toward our people who have no other adequate means of public transport, not only to make up the deficit, but indeed to maintain a service that is essential to our people, and even to improve it, by allowing the CN to modernize its cars, most of which are obsolete, and to maintain the services that those trains offer to travellers. Let us improve the reservation system by making enough cars available in order to be able to face any situation and to carry all passengers who wish to travel, especially during peak periods.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that Canadian National authorities know that at Christmas, New Year, Easter and other holidays, a large number of people from Gaspé visit their families in Montreal and other areas of Quebec. Furthermore, students spend their vacations in Gaspé and must return home afterwards. Each year, despite the many representations that have been made, there are never enough cars to carry those travellers. I believe there is at least a certain miscalculation and a lack of foresight which it is worthwhile to point out.

I know this is a difficult situation for the company which has to compete with an increasing number of vehicles, but thanks to sustained publicity on the part of the company's management, those who have never boarded a

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train, though they criticize at every opportunity, will end up using it because, in my opinion, it is the safest means of public transport and could become one of the speediest considering the advances of modern technology. It would be a mistake on the part of railway companies to drop passengers services. As for me, and I was pleased that the hon. member who spoke before me pointed it out, it is the means of transport of the future and the least expensive.

When one considers the enormous amounts the governments have and will have to invest in the future to maintain a road network which is obsolete before it is completed, besides the agricultural land spaces which are gradually phased out from our heritage and the many lives that are lost every year and even every day on public roads, compared with the cost of construction of a railway which requires relatively less replacement and maintenance, then governments and railway companies should urgently and seriously consider, not to drop railway passengers services, but rather to modernize them and make them speedier and more attractive. Tremendous amounts of money will thus be saved at all levels of government to the advantage of taxpayers who will be also able to travel safely on an almost pollution-free road.

In concluding my remarks, Mr. Speaker, may I suggest to the government and to my colleagues that it is about time that we take off the CN's back the notorious debt which this company has been compelled to assume when it acquired various railway companies. Thus, we will have helped dispel a nightmare that needlessly haunts the Canadian National, that eats up a great deal of its budget and too often, compels us, taxpayers and members of Parliament to be called upon to vote certain sums of money to make up the deficit. Were it not for this heavy load, we might some day see more encouraging results and, perhaps, some profits that would enable the railway companies to develop at home a better public transportation system.

[*English*]

**Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot):** Mr. Speaker, sitting here this afternoon and listening to the sometimes emotional rhetoric used in the discussion of transportation, I am inclined to think that the field is wide open. This bill legalizes the granting of money which is perhaps already spent by the CNR on property, branch lines, equipment, telecommunications, hotels and other investments. The debate has ranged across various problems in our country, and certainly transportation is of vital importance in a country as diverse as Canada.

I was inclined to look up the National Transportation Act which was passed by the House back in 1967. I was interested to hear the hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher) this afternoon condemn the CNR and its operations, and say that it has now become completely divorced from any responsibility to the elected representatives. I wonder what position he would have taken on that government legislation which was implemented back in 1967. I suppose that like all good trained seals he, too, would have found plenty of reasons to support it, as did many of them at that time.

I was also interested to hear the hon. member for Regina-Lake centre (Mr. Benjamin) speak about socialism. I always like to hear the socialists talk about socialism. I