

Supply—Transport

What is needed in my constituency is a completely new service based on twentieth century standards. This involves, first of all, separating the freight service from the passenger, mail and express service. Present boats could be utilized for scheduled freight service until more suitable and more economic boats can be obtained. Then they could probably be used in the summer for tourist trips to Labrador and in winter for tourist trips to the Caribbean and West Indies. For passengers, express and first class mail we need fast boats running between Port aux Basques and Terrenceville with a frequency of three trips a week each way.

I stress the fact that Terrenceville should be regarded as a terminal because it has been used as a passenger terminal for the past 12 or 14 years even though the eastern terminal is based at Argentia. There is no point in passengers staying on a ship for two or three days and travelling over rough waters when they can get to St. John's from Terrenceville by road within two hours.

I understand that in parts of Europe governments, travel agencies and steamship companies have utilized hydrofoil boats capable of carrying 100 to 150 passengers at speeds around 30 miles an hour. This is the sort of service that I think would solve the problem I have been describing. I understand that hydrofoil craft are now being manufactured in Italy which are capable of travelling in rough seas with waves up to 12 feet high. This type of boat would suit the conditions under which the people in my riding have to travel for the greater portion of the year. I would therefore urge the C.N.R. and the government to find some solution along these lines. This vicious circle of avoidance of responsibility must be broken.

● (1:10 p.m.)

The premier of the province of Newfoundland has proclaimed 1966 as "come home" year. One may expect the amount of traffic to be considerably increased over that of previous years, and in view of the experience my constituents have had during the past two years the situation will be indescribable unless something is done. I again urge the government, as the owner of the railway system in Newfoundland, to take immediate steps to remedy the situation I have described along the lines I have suggested.

Mr. Fawcett: Mr. Chairman, I should like to make a few observations on item No. 1 in respect of railway transportation. This is a subject with which I am familiar as a result

of my employment in the transportation industry with the Canadian National Railways for the last 25 years. I must agree with the hon. member for Medicine Hat that many of the problems facing the industry today are a direct result of a lack of any comprehensive national transportation policy, a lack of delegation of authority and the improper exercise of the authority that does exist. It would appear that the Board of Transport Commissioners are not carrying out their proper function in protecting the interests of the public in respect of railway transportation. Their decisions appear to reflect acquiescence in company pressure and a lack of proper and logical investigation. It seems that they turn deaf ears to the protestations of the public. This is particularly apparent in their decision to allow the discontinuance of the Canadian Pacific's "Dominion".

I think that one of the first questions one must ask is whether railway passenger service is a profitable enterprise. I must admit that the answer of necessity is that it is not an extremely profitable business. There are a great many more costly aspects involved in passenger transportation than in freight transportation. As an example of these extra costs let me point to the necessity of providing sleeping and dining facilities and the accompanying employment of sleeping car porters and dining car staff. In addition, there is always a possibility of a loss in respect of ordering foodstuffs. Public relations efforts must be maintained in order to induce people to travel by rail. In view of all the facts I have to admit that railway passenger service is not an extremely profitable enterprise.

It would appear from the Canadian Pacific's submission that the "Dominion" is not a profitable operation even during peak periods of business. I must disagree with that submission on this basis. Passenger service is not a profitable enterprise when looked at on a full time basis because there are peak periods and low periods. At times during low periods railway companies do only 20 per cent of the passenger business they do during peak periods. This makes passenger business a very precarious enterprise. However, during peak periods there must be a profit or the average loss would be a great deal higher.

I was a little surprised when the Board of Transport Commissioners decided against reinstating the operation of the Canadian Pacific's "Dominion" during peak periods. The Canadian Pacific suggested there would be a