

*Rail Transport*

**Mr. Guay (St. Boniface):** I should just like to mention a few other points, Mr. Speaker. If the service had been continued, with the taxpayers paying 80 per cent of the losses incurred by the railway companies, in 1968 the distribution of cost per passenger would have ranged from \$2.06 for the passenger, \$0.61 for the railway company and \$2.44 for the taxpayer for the Canadian National Toronto-Palmerston service. The cost would have ranged from \$3.36 for the passenger, \$3.92 for the railway company and \$15.69 for the taxpayer for the Canadian Pacific Toronto-Owen Sound service.

Other studies have been carried out as we are all aware. A lot of consideration has been given to the cost of improvements and so on. A good number of bus services require improvements in equipment, but their financial positions prevent them from taking action. It does appear that, in that particular district, public intercity transit is not well regarded. A possible answer to this may be the fact that the road network is good and that people prefer the automobile for travelling.

I should like to point out that further action will be taken by the Minister of Transport. In more recent months, as an indication of the very strong concern of the federal government for passenger services in southwestern Ontario, the Minister of Transport asked the president of the Canadian Transport Commission once again to carry out an investigation of the transportation needs of the residents of the area. This the CTC has undertaken and the minister is now awaiting a report on the situation in the area. The minister has already indicated in this House that he will discuss this report at a trilevel meeting with Ontario and the municipalities so that we can solve this problem.

It is useful at this time to recall that the government of Canada is spending tremendous amounts of money to ensure the mobility of the Canadian population, both for its leisure and business travel. It is the policy of this government to ensure adequacy of service to all the population of the country, and no less for people from southwestern Ontario.

Efforts are being exercised in connection with all modes of transport to ensure that Canada is benefiting from all technological advances. At the present time we are sponsoring additional car ferries; we are expanding our airports; we are creating new air services; we are participating in road improvement programs with the provinces; we are funding research in the railway passenger field, and so on. These are tangible efforts made by this government to get at the passenger service problem in Canada and in southwestern Ontario. Items such as increased fuel costs, scarce energy resources, and technological advances such as the LRC and turbo-trains may prove to be significant factors. The future of passenger trains in Canada may soon prove to be more interesting. It is in this context that the people of southwestern Ontario should await the result of the new study undertaken by the Canadian Transport Commission.

**Mr. Terry Grier (Toronto-Lakeshore):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to intervene briefly in this debate to state once again the support of my party for the sentiments and opinion expressed in the motion of the hon. member for Perth-Wilmot (Mr. Jarvis), which may I say were also ably

[Mr. Baker.]

expressed not long ago in this House by the hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher). I am not from southwestern Ontario, unless one feels that metropolitan Toronto falls within that category, but as a sometimes member of the committee on transportation who has received correspondence, particularly in the last few months, about this matter, I welcome the opportunity to say a word or two about it.

● (1730)

It has already been said that this passenger service was discontinued some three years ago, and that last year the standing committee of this House unanimously recommended reinstatement of that service. As has already been mentioned, despite that unanimous recommendation no action was taken by the railways, the Canadian Transport Commission or the government. I should have thought that in the political atmosphere of a year or so ago, a unanimous recommendation of the committee would have carried considerable weight. However, this idea of reinstatement of passenger service in southwestern Ontario seems to be an idea in danger of being smothered by too much agreement.

It is easy to say one is in favour, but it is more difficult to translate that statement into some kind of action. Despite all the protestations of the parliamentary secretary, all the studies that are going on, or may be going on again, the government in fact has not committed itself to the reinstatement of passenger service. It has committed itself to another study. I think that is the important distinction which will not be lost upon the residents of the area and ought not to be lost upon the members of this House.

The government, perhaps understandably, wishes to follow the advice of the transport commission in a matter of this kind. Having done that, I think it is not appropriate for the government to suggest that it agrees with this motion. An agreement by the government must be translated into action, and until such time as action to implement the sentiments of this motion is undertaken by the government, the government cannot be stated to be in agreement with it.

My concern about this issue is not only the concern of one who is interested in the field of transportation and who travels in, even if he does not live there, southwestern Ontario. Mine is also the concern of one who sees a progressive deterioration and abandonment of passenger service generally as a step in the wrong direction. Surely, in face of the looming problems of energy and the destruction of our environment, along with the need to service an increasingly large and mobile population, we must not discontinue passenger service or go along with the abandonment of rail services without counting the cost of alternatives.

It is easy to say it would have cost people two or three cents a year to subsidize the operation of certain lines, but what is it costing the people in terms of alternatives to which they must turn, in terms of alternatives which are not there, or in terms of the destruction of the environment which is a concomitant of increasing highway traffic and pollution arising from the use of buses and cars which in increasing numbers use our highways? The arithmetic