

*Canadian National Railways and Air Canada*

affected. So in a sense we have been isolated from the service that should be provided by an efficient, well accepted railroad system which should grow and change to meet the new needs and new desires of the community.

The experience in the area has not been that of an expansion of service but, rather, a diminution. It is not exemplified so much by the removal of tracks as perhaps by the closing of stations, of telegraph services, freight services and the other things that formerly served these communities. In the time that I have lived in this area, the very valuable rail service that linked Ottawa, the national capital, and the St. Lawrence region has disappeared. The bus service has been augmented to replace it, but that is not desirable in relation to the quality of life. The freight office which formerly served what we hope is a growing industrial part of Ontario along the St. Lawrence has been closed and people now have to go to the larger centres for this service. This is regrettable and I believe the railroads, particularly the Canadian National Railways, have not been too concerned about serving the area. They have been concerned with the difficulties of the balance sheet, I believe, and have not sought to improve and augment the service for a growing area.

In eastern Ontario, Air Canada does not provide the type of service which ought to be available to the national capital. It is difficult to obtain a reservation between Ottawa and Toronto or Ottawa and Montreal. I believe this is because the airline does not offer the right kind of service for the short haul and tremendous passenger load involved. This matter was raised in the House yesterday by the hon. member for Wellington (Mr. Hales) who put a question to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand). The hon. member inquired about the possibility of an airbus service between Ottawa and Toronto to begin with, and perhaps later between Ottawa and Montreal similar to the service operated so successfully between Calgary and Edmonton. The answer of the minister was that this matter was on the agenda of the transport commission and he hoped a solution would be found.

● (2130)

If adequate service is to be provided within the foreseeable future, this item ought to have been off that agenda a long time ago, because the problem has been developing rapidly for many years: the government ought not still to be in the process of considering it. The problem is with us. Planning ought to have been undertaken many years ago. That sort of planning has been brought to fruition in other areas of Canada and certainly, in the United States.

If there is to be a proper service for those who want to visit the national capital or leave it for business reasons or personal reasons, I think it is essential that there be provided continuing service with economical equipment. It is hard to conceive that in 1973 the minister should stand in this House and say that the matter of air transport between the national capital and the rest of Canada is on the agenda of the transport commission. That sounds as if the matter has not yet been attacked, let alone solved. I think that we of this area in particular will suffer as a result of this lack of action. All parties in the House, indeed all the residents of this area as well as many other areas of Canada, would support the implementation of this sort of program even on a pilot basis.

[Mr. Baker.]

I also wish to deal briefly with the importance of railroads in urban development. This government has brought forward the semblance of a plan—I do not know if it will be implemented—which provides for the development of new towns and urban areas around existing towns. The plan applies to my particular area of Canada and to many others. It is an important plan because anyone who now lives in a large, urban area feels the effect of the packing into fewer and fewer acres of more and more people. We see what is happening almost wherever we go. We see high-rise buildings sprouting like dandelions in our urban areas.

There is good reason for such development in the national capital area. The reason is this: for all the time that I have been in this area, and for many years before that, there has been inconclusive discussion between the national government, the government of Ontario and the government of Quebec with respect to the provision of rapid transit service in the area. If we are to make the system of new towns viable, or for that matter succeed in developing population centres around existing towns, we will need to tackle the problem of interurban transit. The railroads of this country, particularly the national railroad, will have a big part to play in that development. It will need to do what it already does to a great extent in and around metropolitan Toronto.

That is why we must view with some reservations announcements by the minister responsible for urban affairs with respect to the tearing up of rail lines leading to the centres of towns. We may need to relay some of those rail lines, if we are to move the population which we hope will go out to the new towns and centres of our metropolitan areas. One of the major difficulties that the present government and the government which will succeed it will need to tackle concerns the development of interurban transit, that is to say, inexpensive interurban transit which will persuade those who wish to live in the core areas of cities to move out, and persuade others who wish to move into cities to stay outside. Such a system, if it is to be viable, ought to be rapid and convenient. That is the service we must provide from outlying areas to the central core.

Further, it ought to dissuade those who would use automobiles from using their vehicles and encourage them to use the public transportation system. It ought to be a system that works, that could move masses of people over fairly large distances in a short time and meet the requirements of their working day. It is important for us to consider that aspect, and the part that railroads would play in the life of a community which is changing. Our community is changing: as it changes we will need new equipment and new methods of moving people.

I think the government ought to encourage the railways to undertake research to an extent that we have not hitherto seen in this country. In my area of the country there is a debate going on as to whether a multilane, limited access highway should be built. It would run from Ottawa, south through the large populated area of Nepean township, and eventually connect with Highway 16. It would also connect with Highway 401 which links Toronto and Montreal, the nearest large centres. The necessity for the highway is being debated because of North American