

I attended the hearings of the commission at Owen Sound during the Easter recess. I was rather encouraged because I could not help but feel that, in view of the tremendous pressure brought to bear by the representations made to the Canadian Transport Commission at the hearings, the commission could do nothing else but maintain passenger rail service in this area. However, along with a lot of other people in the area I was shocked when I saw the decision handed down on September 30 by the Canadian Transport Commission. The commission decided to cut off all passenger services north and west of Guelph, including those serving my part of western Ontario, the city of Owen Sound, the town of Southampton, the town of Kincardine, Stratford and Goderich.

I do not think that this is a good decision or a fair one, because I do not think that attention was paid to all the representations made at the hearing. In fact, when I see commissions like this in operation, I sometimes wonder whether we are living in a democracy or in a country where commissions and bodies of this type make the final rulings that destroy the right of the individual not only to be heard but to have his representations considered. Believe you me, Mr. Speaker, I do not think the commission listened carefully to the words of the people who made representations at Owen Sound.

I should like to refer to that part of the decision which relates to the cutting off of the railway services which I have mentioned. Paragraph (a) of the decision reads:

The Committee finds that the actual losses incurred do not justify the continuance of these passenger train services for the convenience of the number of passengers that have used them and that, in the opinion of the Committee, would be likely to use them if the services were not discontinued.

It was elicited at the hearing that the commission did not even consult with the mid-western organization that was making surveys of the requirements of this particular area. Neither did it listen to the representative of the province of Ontario, which is making a study of the transportation needs of the region. The Commission went ahead without waiting for the completion of these surveys and studies, and as a result did not get the true picture.

The next paragraph of the decision reads as follows:

The Committee finds that the highway system serving the points in this region of Ontario served by the passenger train services is excellent and is probably as extensive as could be found in any comparable area of Canada. The Committee further finds that the existing bus services in the area constitute a satisfactory alternative public transportation service and the Committee accepts the evidence adduced at the hearings that these bus services will be adequate in capacity and will be increased in frequency as required by traffic demands resulting from discontinuance of passenger train services.

On talking to the mayor of Southampton, one of the towns affected, I learned that if you go to Toronto from Southampton, a distance of 120 miles, by bus, you travel via London, which adds another 80-odd miles to the journey. So, the suggestion that the bus service is a

satisfactory alternative is not correct. The decision continues:

The Committee agrees with the submissions of both railways that discontinuance would have a minimal effect on other passenger train services.

One thing that I found most difficult to understand was that one of the railroads said that if the other's services were discontinued, it would take up the slack. But what has happened? Both services have been cut off. The CPR service from Toronto to Owen Sound has been discontinued, and if this decision is upheld there will be no passenger service by rail from Toronto.

Then, the committee report has this paragraph:

Finally, the Committee further finds that discontinuance of these services would not, in its opinion, conflict with future plans for the area to be further studied by the government of Ontario in accordance with the guidelines of the report, Design for Development: The Toronto-Centred Region, which was adduced in evidence by the government of Ontario.

I do not think there is any justification for this particular decision. In fact, I feel that the whole thing was already cut and dried between the railways and the transport commission before these hearings at Owen Sound, commenced. The hearings were a sop to the people of the area, an attempt to convince them the commission was doing the job it was supposed to do. This is just not good enough.

I also find it hard to understand why the things we asked for, such as improved service, a survey of the requirements of the area and a possible alternative service, were not taken into consideration. However, in denying the railroad company's application to cut off train service from Guelph to Toronto, the commission used the very reasoning we had asked them to use in our case. I should like to put on the record what the commission said about maintaining the service from Guelph to Toronto. Incidentally, there are a lot of passenger trains passing through Guelph en route to Toronto, irrespective of this particular service, so it would not have meant too much to the area had this service been discontinued. However, it meant a lot to the area I represent. The commission says:

None of the evidence convinces us that the actual losses incurred could not be substantially reduced by changes in equipment assignment, and by providing more convenient and more suitable service based on surveys using modern methods, of the requirements of passengers, both actual and potential.

We have been asking the railroads for years to upgrade their equipment and to make more modern rolling stock available. If they were to do this, they would attract more passengers and make the service more sound economically.

• (9:40 p.m.)

I was interested in a little booklet that came to my desk the other day entitled "News briefs from France". There is an article in it about transportation in France