

My colleague, the hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse) was telling me a couple of days ago about some of the advances in the railway system in Japan. He mentioned the unirail system with which I am not very familiar. Countries like Japan are 100 years ahead of Canada in this respect. They have integrated their road and railway systems in the phenomenal engineering feat of the unirail. I wonder if anybody has thought about adapting this concept to Canadian conditions. I wonder whether the CNR has seriously considered this phenomenal engineering feat, whether they have conducted a sophisticated cost analysis to justify putting it into operation in certain parts of Canada, such as the provinces on the east coast, an area which is fast becoming a haven for people who want to live a more relaxed kind of life in a different environment. What vision do they have?

Back in the 1870's we had John A. Macdonald who spoke about building a railway across Canada. People must have thought him a nut to be talking at that time about building a railway across uninhabited areas, across the Rocky Mountains. In 1885 they drove the last spike and the whole country was joined together by the silver rails. But in 1968, those great promoters of the CNR decided they would abandon the whole passenger service in one province. They do not seem to be able to find ways to upgrade the roadbed and to build new coaches to attract tourists. Yet, the Ontario government did so in 1902. Perhaps hon. members will recall that the Ontario Northland railway was built then. There was prospect for development there. They opened up the great mines in the southwestern part of the Canadian shield as a result of the building of this railway which is one of the few railways in the world which makes money. The area is a great tourist attraction. Between the middle of June and the middle of September you cannot get a place on the Ontario Northland railway. I believe it is called the Polar Bear Express.

At that time, back in 1902, people with vision realized that with the beauty in that part of Canada, and with its potential, this could be a paying proposition. Today it is actually making money. If anybody would like to take the time to write to the Ontario minister of transportation he could obtain new, beautiful annual reports showing that this railway works. Why can the federal government, through its national agency of the Canadian National, not adopt such an attitude and explore such a possibility? The tourist potential is unlimited. The railway in Newfoundland would have been the only narrow gauge railway in the western world. My colleagues, the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) and the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Carter) spoke about building a wide gauge railway. Perhaps that is farfetched, but has anybody ever explored it? We have a serious unemployment problem. According to DBS statistics 18.5 per cent of our people were unemployed in January. Why cannot this be looked at as a possible way of putting thousands of people to work? Can it pay dividends? Can it open up access to resources, to our forests, to our minerals, and provide transport for those products as well as for our fisheries products to central Canada and the eastern seaboard? I do not know, Mr. Speaker. But I ask, has anybody ever thought about it?

*CNR and Air Canada*

• (1540)

All we get from the government is the reply, "we have abandoned this service in accordance with the act." We will have to wait until hell freezes over before the Prime Minister and the government display a flexible attitude to our province. They always look at it in terms that we have only half a million people and 200,000 square miles of territory. We have a vast hinterland with very few people inhabiting it. This is the main reason we cannot make a greater financial contribution to the people of Canada.

In this respect government members have a narrow-minded, introverted, reactionary attitude. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to the people of Canada, that during the next decade the true worth of the resources of that part of Canada will come to be realized. It is only a matter of time until using our marine resources on the continental shelf, the unbelievable mineral resources of Labrador and Newfoundland, the forestry potential of that vast hinterland, the equally unbelievable hydro development potential, now coming into effect with the billion dollar power plant at Churchill Falls, Labrador, we will contribute our full share to the rest of the country. This is all the more reason for the federal government to look at our problems in the broadest possible perspective.

I say that men like the member who for years represented the constituency I represent are betraying the people back on the east coast. They are doing that by permitting this kind of attitude to develop. Such a person becomes very popular when he can go into the Prime Minister's office and say, "In Newfoundland we have just saved you \$900,000," or go into the office of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson), who in effect is his boss, and tell him, "We have saved you \$900,000." Wouldn't that put him in a position of prestige and authority? That type of attitude has to go, Mr. Speaker. The type of attitude displayed by the Canadian Transport Commission, the Department of Transport and the government, has to go. We need more perspective, more vision, more foresight.

Only today I was informed once more that there has been another train derailment, this time at Jasper in the northwest part of the province of Alberta. We had three derailments last week in the province of Quebec. Twice during the Christmas recess I attempted to travel by rail in Ontario, and I was impeded by derailments. Once returning from Newfoundland during the air traffic controllers strike, I was impeded by a train derailment somewhere in Nova Scotia. Every week we hear about train derailments. My colleagues who know about railroads tell me that this is the result of the Canadian National cutting back on its section men, and on the extra gangs it once hired. The end result is that the modern day, heavy trains cannot carry their loads in safety. If this trend continues, it will only be a matter of time until the Canadian National can justify the elimination of all rail lines.

If the Canadian National management are only interested in qualifying for the 80 per cent subsidy from the Canadian government, all I can say is that this is a hazardous way of going about it. They are downgrading their own roadbeds, their service on the railways, and the small railway stations. Has anybody here ever gone into a small railway station in the year 1972 and thought he was back in the year 1880? You have to bulldoze your way into the