

*Transportation Policy*

repairs to be done on the Chibougamau line—not between Dolbeau and Chambord—on the Chibougamau line, the passenger service is to be interrupted for a month and a half.

● (1600)

Passenger service is to be curtailed for a month and a half because there is minor work to do. Imagine that! Our trains do not even run in daytime! The trains leave Dolbeau at 8 p.m., so they do not run during work hours. This is an excuse. I read a notice from Mr. Gagné, from Jonquière, advising employees they are going to be laid off. That is final, passenger service is curtailed in our area. Mr. Speaker, I now serve notice to the minister that this will not be done, if it can be helped. If the minister wishes to assume some responsibility in the matter of railway services, he knows he can do so. I urge him now that the service be maintained during the coming months, because the peak season begins in July for the travelling population that cannot take the plane—apple, tomato and cucumber pickers, they travel during July, August and September. These are the heaviest transportation months, and passenger services are being stopped. When I asked why, I was told there are repairs to be made in the Chibougamau area. But there must be limits, Mr. Speaker.

I wish to draw the attention of the minister and I know that he will do something. That train is essential. Repairs have been done between Montreal and Chambord and the train service was not interrupted. Repairs have also been done elsewhere, but the train service remains in operation. The passenger service should be kept for those months, because that is when the traffic is heaviest.

The minister made a policy statement this afternoon. He said:

It is proposed that:

- 2) it is the responsibility of government to attend to the provision of an efficient total system for this purpose.

—in order to assure similar service and treatment to everyone.

I realize, as the minister, that transport in Canada is not really a rest cure. As for transport in heavily populated European countries, it is not difficult. However when dealing with Canada, almost 4,500 miles wide, where transport services must be organized for a minimum of people, compared with the vast dimensions of our country, I know it is difficult. It is a problem, and because of that I agree with the minister. Still, we must bear in mind the fact that the greater the problem, the more we must resolve to face it. I feel that the resolutions made by the minister this afternoon are a start towards accelerating the modernization of transport.

With regard to our Canadian railway companies, I believe the minister has proposed to make efforts towards combining their facilities so that, for instance, we will not end up having two stations facing each other. That is what we see everywhere along the way: CP stations, and CN stations. Why could they not become union stations, that would reduce expenses. In our area, we are forced to close down all our stations. Go and see for yourselves: the terminal in our area is closed every night of the week, even Sunday night. We wait for the train under the rain. How interesting: we have a nice big station but it is closed

[Mr. Gauthier (Roberval).]

That is the CN. If one visits my area, one will have to catch the train both ways under the rain because some stations are under lock and key. It is scandalous in my part of the country. It is high time something is done. I was happy to hear today that the minister intends to present a motion. To my mind it is more than high time for the minister and everyone to deal with the problem in an effort to bring the responsible to take decisions, so that decisions are no longer reached by the technocrats of Montreal who never leave their desks. I am confident that if the minister visits the provinces to discuss the matter with the people in the field, he will discover arguments that never occurred to his technocrats in Ottawa and Montreal.

Inspectors come down and make a little trip in Montreal and Ottawa, come back with some sort of report and then good-bye! That is not the way to give service to the public, Mr. Speaker.

Third, concerning the principles, one can read that the realization of this objective demands the integration of services provided by the most appropriate means for each particular service. It is well understood that, as he mentioned himself, the minister wants to try and combine things and have the population benefit from all modes of transportation, water, sea and land, in an attempt to give justice to big communities while guaranteeing fair service to remote areas. In this respect, I think the minister still has much work to do. He will have to make interviews, meet people in the field, because we realize now that, mostly in passengers services, the airplane will increasingly take the lion's share. And it is good, but those who cannot travel by plane should not be forgotten. The greatest part of the labour class cannot afford taking the plane. They can only rely on the bus and the private service. Concerning our system of free competition, as the minister said, it must be absolutely incumbent upon the government to make a decision on the agreements and delimitate the fields of action of private enterprise and the state, to seek a combination of the two that would give the best service to travelers.

Three reports have been presented today. I did not have time to read them through, but I think when we have examined those reports on freight and passenger transportation we will be able to make a judgment on the capital invested by both companies and the whole Canadian people. If it were distributed more equitably, all Canadians would benefit. I noted a declaration by the minister concerning airlines for which users do not pay as much as for other services in suburbs or remote areas. The minister should undertake a general survey aiming at the standardization of all fares. I believe his statement this afternoon will not only attract the attention of manufacturers, tradesmen and passengers on our three transportation systems, it will also reassure people who had been anxiously waiting for the minister's statement. We are looking forward to the results of today's survey as it is not good enough to make fine speeches and work out good plans if these are irrelevant.

I hope that, upon completion of the survey, when the minister presents the legislation he has promised to the House, we shall at last be able to say: "Now we do have an adequate and suitable transportation system". And in both