

*Transportation*

Alberta to charge those pioneer rates. They can charge double or treble the ordinary freight rate because some lines have not been completed. This situation is supported by the statutes of Canada. Thank goodness we are going to scrap these statutes. However when we scrap these old, worn out statutes, let us put in statutes which are going to develop Canada in the most equitable manner. Let us stop the situation which finds the trappers in northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories, the pioneers of mining and the prospectors, being charged treble and quadruple the ordinary freight rates, merely because the railroads have a monopoly.

I hear a great deal about the trouble in which the railroads find themselves. I am sorry, but I cannot weep for the railroads. We own the Canadian National and are responsible for the policies of that company. I will not worry about them. The great Canadian Pacific railroad, which at one time helped to link Canada into a great nation, has been delinquent in recent years. Part of their contract was to provide transportation. So far as passengers are concerned, we knew they would not make money by taking settlers out to the west to develop the land. However this company was willing to accept the hundreds of thousands of acres of land, including oil rights, in return for this gamble. Their gamble has paid off, and it has paid off again and again. Now they own great steamship lines and great air lines, but they want to get out of the transportation business because it is on the red side of the ledger. If we add up all the money this company made out of its contracts with the Canadian people, I do not think they have lost the amount of money they say they have in running the Canadian or the Dominion across Canada.

We do not want to rake over old ground. However, we do want to make sure that this great railroad company does not get out from under. If they are no longer going to keep their side of the contract by supplying passenger service across Canada in return for the enormous profits which they have put into other endeavours, such as oil leases and mining, then I say we should make it abundantly clear that if they want us to take over that form of transportation we are going to be hard bargainers. Parliament, one hundred years from the time the company was set up, can draft a bill to make sure we take over on the basis of a fair contract. I do not suggest a lawsuit, but this new statute should make certain that, when we make a contract with

[Mr. Bigg.]

them in which they are given tremendous rights in our country, they are obliged to pay their share. I do not believe the Canadian people can be accused of being niggardly during the depression years. We dug down deep into the pockets of the taxpayers and saved the Canadian Pacific from bankruptcy. Now that the company is flush, I would appeal to them to pay their share in building up this integrated transportation system which Canada needs so badly.

**Mr. G. D. Clancy (Yorkton):** Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak about a western problem, namely the abandonment of railway lines. There is a great deal of logic in this move to abandon some of our railway lines. It is obvious they are uneconomical and not doing the country any good. Perhaps there is a little bit of pride because a railway runs through your town, whether it runs through every day, or every ten days or every five weeks.

I am going to suggest that the commission consider one or two points in connection with these abandonments. I agree with the hon. member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Hamilton) when he states that this should be an area study, and not just a blanket study. If we have the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific running almost side by side, let us decide which of the two shall be discontinued. The commission should look at the effect of sharing branch lines. In other words, where lines complement each other it is cheaper for the Canadian National to go over a Canadian Pacific branch line to their main line. It would be cheaper for the C.P.R. to send their trains out over the C.N.R. branch line to their main line. So it would save everyone money.

● (8:40 p.m.)

Secondly, I want to consider what happens when a branch line is abandoned. Is the steel just left there, are the ties just left there and is the right of way just left there to rot, with weeds growing around it? I think that if the commission were given the facts they would suggest that the steel be taken out, that the ties and roadbed be taken up, and that the mineral rights and right of way should revert either to the province or to the municipality concerned. That is just a suggestion I would make. Because if abandoned lines are just left there, the land is wasted.

All I suggest to the commission is that they take these few points into consideration when giving permission to abandon, say, 20 miles of line.