

district and I thank him for what he has done for us in the past. I am also grateful to the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Fournier) for the improvements carried out by his department at various points in the Chicoutimi district and I ask him not to forget in his estimates the people of Petit Saguenay who ask, quite legitimately, that urgent repair work be done to the wharf of their village; he should also remember the people of Grande Baie, who are in the same situation. The erection of public buildings, such as post offices and customs offices should be undertaken without delay.

As regards the hon. the Minister of Transport (Mr. Chevrier), he would be well-advised to rouse the apathy of the C.N.R. authorities and remind them, for one thing, that Quebec not only has never been pampered as far as railway lines are concerned but even has not now and never has had her fair share. To be convinced of that, we merely have to glance at the area of each province compared with the total area of Canada, and to compute the percentage of population as well as the railroad mileage now in operation.

The figures, compiled in 1943 by the chamber of commerce of Charlevoix East, gave us a fairly accurate idea of the poor treatment meted out to us. Since that time, the situation has become still worse.

Alberta, with an area of 6.08 per cent and a population of 6.9 per cent, owns 13 per cent of the railway lines.

British Columbia, with an area of 9.05 per cent and a population of 7.09 per cent, owns 9 per cent of the railway lines.

Manitoba, with an area of 6.08 per cent and a population of 6.33 per cent, owns 11 per cent of the railway lines.

New Brunswick, with an area of 0.8 per cent and a population of 3.97 per cent, owns 4 per cent of the railway lines.

Nova Scotia, with an area of 0.6 per cent and a population of 5.02 per cent, owns 3 per cent of the railway lines.

Ontario, with an area of 11.0 per cent and a population of 32.9 per cent, owns 25 per cent of the railway lines.

Prince Edward Island, with an area of 0.05 per cent and a population of 0.82 per cent, owns 0.7 per cent of the railway lines.

Quebec, with an area of 19.0 per cent and a population of 29.07 per cent, owns 12 per cent of the railway lines.

Saskatchewan, with an area of 19.0 per cent and a population of 7.77 per cent, owns 20 per cent of the railway lines.

Yukon and Northwest Territories, with an area of 39 per cent and a population of 0.13 per cent, owns 0.13 per cent of the railway lines.

Thus it may be seen that Quebec, with 29.07 per cent of the total population of the country and 19 per cent of its area, enjoys only 12 per cent of the Canadian railway lines. We surely are not imposing upon anyone when we ask for an improvement of our situation in this regard. It is not an overstatement to say that the Kingdom of Saguenay, which includes Charlevoix, Chicoutimi, Lake St. John and Roberval counties, has the poorest railway service in the province of Quebec. Only one single track line connects this whole district with the rest of the country. This is clearly inadequate.

The present railroad, built in 1887, no longer meets the district's needs. The curves are too sharp and the slopes too steep. The journey is too slow and too long. To mention but one case, the night train between Quebec and Chicoutimi takes 9 hours and 25 minutes to cover 227.4 miles, which is an average speed of less than 25 miles per hour.

Moreover, despite the goodwill, the competence and ability of Canadian National Railways employees in this sector, passenger trains are nearly always late and accommodation is often very hard to get.

Among urgently needed improvements are the elimination of crossings, the rebuilding of certain stations and reorganized yards. The electrification of our trains, by reason of the abundance of water-powers in our district, is a project which should be considered. We cannot obtain from the Canadian National Railways detailed figures about its operations, but judging by the heavy traffic carried on in our midst we may well believe that the government railway, particularly during the war years, made thousands of dollars of profit in our district.

The bright economic prospects which the Chicoutimi district is now facing justify every confidence in the future. They will ensure to our railway an ever increasing income and a still greater prosperity. Therefore it is in the interests of the company that it should operate a service ensuring substantial dividends, and our district cannot, without running the risk of seeing its progress opportunities jeopardized, tolerate that the present high-handed treatment be longer meted out to it.

I wish to congratulate the Saguenay Economic Planning Council as well as all the public bodies of my constituency, on the