

transportation service is provided by regional carriers. I look again to my own constituency for a good example of this. Yorkton is served by a regional carrier. It provides a service, not once a day but maybe four or five times a week. The schedule often changes every three or four months; it is irregular and limited. When you have a whole series of unplanned regional carrier services, you are only asking for inefficiency, you are only asking for something that does not take the needs of each community into consideration. A community the size of Yorkton should have regular, cheap, efficient air service. It doesn't have that today. We should work as rapidly as possible to integrate the regional air carriers with Air Canada. In that way better services could be provided to all communities regardless of their size. We should have one air transportation system in the country. When we have several we are only asking for inefficiency and inferior service.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, my impression is that transportation in Canada today is badly planned. It is provided by different companies on an ad hoc basis. There is a general lack of government control over transportation planning. As I said before, we must evolve a national transportation plan in which the government has influence and where it can take into account all factors and all types of problems. I think we must have a transportation system that is publicly-owned. One transportation system would be more efficient than present arrangements and it would be more responsive to the needs of people. Again I say that I am talking about a publicly-owned transportation system that could be orientated to the service of the people. In that way we could plan according to social priorities and needs.

Once again I welcome the announcement made the other day by the Minister of Transport, bringing into effect the recommendation of the Transport and Communications Committee pertaining to the pensions of retired employees of the CNR. I suggest to the minister once again that he do something about long-range transportation policy. This is badly needed, not only for the railway system but for the airlines as well. Smaller communities should not be penalized. It is time to integrate the regional carriers into a national system and let Air Canada service the whole country.

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I will endeavour to be brief because I know the Government House Leader is anxious to get this bill on its way, and by the attitude of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Mahoney) I can see that he is probably anxious too. I hope he will be influenced by that anxiety and so restrain himself from his usual observations from his seat.

This is a very important bill, a very important event in the legislative process of any session of Parliament because it gives us an opportunity to voice our frustration at the CNR. I am sorry that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) is not here tonight. I do not see his parliamentary secretary in his seat either. I am sorry because what we have to say about transportation in Canada, especially as it applies to the CNR and Air

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Canada, should be of importance to them. After all, the minister does have the statutory responsibility of reporting to Parliament for these two Crown corporations.

Canadian National Railways and Air Canada are very important to the Atlantic provinces, and especially important to my province because transportation in Newfoundland in general is Canadian National. Right from the outset of this Parliament we have been concerned following the announcement that rail passenger service in my province was to be eliminated and replaced by road service. We have been pressing for a statement of policy from the government and from Canadian National as to the exact nature of their future plans for Newfoundland, but I am sorry to say that we are still as much in the dark as ever.

Surely it is not too much to expect that Canadian National, which is so important to my part of the country, should be in a position to announce its long-range intentions with respect to the many services it provides. We hear suggestions from the Minister of Transport that continual discussions are taking place with respect to the coastal service in Newfoundland. Indeed, just a few days ago he said he would like to see the coastal service replaced by a more efficient method of transportation. Certainly that is a desirable objective, one with which we all agree, but whether or not it is an attainable objective is something else again. I suspect, and I have long held this belief, that there is a plan within the CNR a plan with a definite time limit, to eliminate the coastal service in Newfoundland and indeed to eliminate railway service in Newfoundland entirely. The events of the last few years certainly indicate this to me.

The railway in Newfoundland today is not as efficient as we would like to see it, yet it still occupies a very important place in the over-all transportation set-up of the province. The coastal service is still very important; it has a vital role to play in providing our people with goods that are so necessary to their way of life around the coast of Newfoundland. Of necessity, these services require substantial public subsidies and will continue to require them. These subsidies should be granted for as long as they are required, provided we as Members of Parliament discharge our obligation during our annual examination on the CN annual report and our annual consideration of this bill to determine whether the service is as efficient as it should be, whether we are getting value for our money and whether we are getting the service that we need. I do not think we are, Sir.

● (8:30 p.m.)

It is a well known fact, for example, that the ferry link between the province of Newfoundland and the mainland is not what it should be. We have often experienced frustration as a result of not having enough accommodation to provide passage for the many tourists who want to visit Newfoundland or for people who either want to visit the province or leave it in their day to day activities. Now, after making repeated representations in this regard, additional ships are to be provided during the peak months of June, July and August.