

*Supply—Transport*

larger ones. So far as the other three provincial districts are concerned the picture is vastly different. These three districts extend roughly along the south coast from Terrenceville to Port aux Basques. This area is served by two C.N.R. coastal boats running between the western terminal at Port aux Basques and the eastern terminal at Argentia, with a weekly frequency in each direction. Except for the fact that these boats are slightly larger and the frequency of trips has increased from every 10 days to 7 days, this service is substantially the same as it was 50 years ago.

The coastline between Terrenceville and Port aux Basques contains some 50 communities with a total population of around 25,000, and it is mainly about the service to this area that I am complaining. On this strip of coastline there are located seven fresh fish processing plants and a number of supply firms and retail stores. All these enterprises are greatly handicapped by the slowness of the C.N.R. service upon which they are completely dependent.

Good, fast, reliable communications are a prime essential for the industrial development of any area, but the Canadian National Railway management think in terms of the nineteenth century. If they do not wake up soon the twentieth century will have completely passed them by without any substantial improvement being achieved. The population of this area about which I am speaking, between Terrenceville and Port aux Basques, has doubled since 1949, and the prosperity of the people has also increased. However, these two facts seem to have escaped the notice of the C.N.R. management.

We are living in the twentieth century and people do not want to spend a week travelling a distance that can and should be covered in a couple of days. Neither do they want to be delayed as they are now for hours and on some occasions for whole days by having to remain in port while the ship takes on and discharges cargo. Neither do they want to suffer the offensive odours and stench which emanate from cargoes such as fish meal, particularly during summertime when the weather is warm and people like to have their portholes open in order to enjoy the cool, fresh air.

Today people want to move as fast as possible. If they have two or three weeks holidays they want to spend the time with their friends and not travelling back and forth on the C.N.R. boats. Those who come

from long distances want to be sure of making connections with the air line services on which they have reservations for the return trip. None of these things are possible at present.

It has been obvious for years that the C.N.R. coastal service is terribly inadequate in terms of the amount of traffic to be handled. People from the United States and from mainland Canada who make their reservations months in advance often arrive at the Port aux Basques terminal only to find that the boat on which their reservations were made has been transferred to another route and the substitute boat provided does not have the type of accommodation they reserved.

Passengers are herded together in small rooms beneath deck or in small deck cabins so tiny that they have to put their luggage outside in order to be able to turn around. Dozens have difficulty in finding even a place to sit much less to lie down. Great credit is due to the crews of these boats; particularly to the captains, officers and stewards who quite often give up their own berths and go out of their way to do everything possible to alleviate the hardships and inconveniences to passengers inherent in these conditions. Without their sympathetic understanding and sacrifices the situation would be quite intolerable.

During the past two or three years I have written a number of letters about this matter to the C.N.R. and to the minister pointing out the deficiency in the service and suggesting remedies, but to date nothing has happened. Dealing with the Canadian National Railway is a most frustrating experience. You write a letter and you wait about two months. Then you get a reply saying they are looking into the problems involved in the matter you have raised. In about another two months you get another long letter defending their poor service. Their attitude seems to be that this service was good enough for our grandfathers and great-grandfathers and it should be good enough for people today.

When we try to pin them down they escape by saying, "Well, we do not own this railway in Newfoundland; we are only operating it for the federal government". Then when one approaches the federal government the answer is, "Well, we cannot do anything unless the C.N.R. management make a recommendation". Thus we go round and round in this vicious circle.

[Mr. Carter.]