

*Supply—Transport*

C.N.R. It has been lowered to the point where people do not want to use the C.P.R. if they can avoid it. It is strange that this standard of efficiency should be lowered with respect to passenger service. But when it comes to keeping up competition with respect to moving certain freight, which is more profitable, the company is able to meet competition either through the use of piggyback trucks or the consolidation of commercial and express service.

Another point that is obvious so far as the C.P.R. is concerned is its elimination of passenger trains, in particular the "Dominion". It was not just a question of whether or not the "Dominion" was needed to transport passengers across the country. It was a deliberately planned program of the company to make the "Dominion" a train that people would from a financial standpoint not use, thus letting the company justify its removal.

It has already been mentioned today that the "Dominion" was finally cut down to two coaches and a passenger car. What a standard for a transcontinental service, leaving only one transcontinental train on the C.P.R. lines. Yet the C.N.R. has two full transcontinental trains each way each day, with such a large number of passengers that one finds difficulty in obtaining reservations.

Another interesting point in this story relates to the use and privilege of rail passes, which were long looked upon as one of the fringe benefits for railroad employees. Today the situation has become such that an employee of the C.P.R. who has laboured down through the years for the privilege of using his travel pass, particularly on reaching retirement age, does not have a pass left at all because there is not a train on which he can use one. The trains on which he was entitled to travel have now been eliminated.

● (7:30 p.m.)

It is obvious that this policy of deterioration as far as passenger train service is concerned is a deliberate one that applies not only to trains such as the "Dominion" but to many local trains as well. This is a policy which means practically the total closing down of intermediate stations. One of the divisions involved is the Lethbridge division of the C.P.R. in my own area where, through their customer service program, as they call it, the C.P.R. has closed 75 of the 112 local stations. Of the remaining 37 stations, it is proposed that 34 will be without agents. It is also proposed to retain only a train operator

[Mr. Thompson.]

at seven of these 34 points. Such an operator could provide little or no agency service to the general public.

This is an indication that the C.P.R. has no intention of continuing either passenger, express or communications services to these communities, many of them towns of 3,000 or 4,000 population.

One might go to the extent of saying that the closing of many of the small stations is not justifiable, but one certainly should not go to the extent that is now taking place in the particular division to which I have referred, and which is being repeated in various divisions across the country.

Another problem relates to the ridiculous fare structure implemented by the C.P.R. In my own constituency the Edmonton to Calgary run is a very important passenger service. A year ago three trains a day ran in each direction, filled to capacity. As a result of the new fare structure and poor service these trains are now running at less than one third capacity. The ridiculous situation has developed in which one can buy a ticket from Calgary to Edmonton for \$9.75. However, if you are enterprising enough you can buy a ticket from Calgary to Red Deer, get off the train there and buy a ticket from Red Deer to Edmonton, thereby saving 50 cents. If you stop at every station along the line, buying tickets between stations, you can cut down the fare by another dollar or more. This situation exists in the face of the fact that one can use the same C.N.R. facilities at a cost of \$4.50.

A year ago fares were competitive. Today we find a situation in which they are not only not competitive, but twice as expensive on one as on the other. This whole structure is designed to discourage people from using passenger train service, thereby giving the C.P.R. a case to bring before the Board of Transport Commissioners and the government in support of its contention that passenger service is no longer profitable.

We have already heard a number of remarks in relation to the slow movement of grain. We learned over the week end about the emergency situation developing in India. Statements have been made by the Secretary General of the United Nations and Secretary General of the Food and Agriculture Organization to the effect that the hunger situation in India has become a major world crisis. Millions of people are going to die this year of starvation unless something is done,