

only one year. I find this rather intriguing, rather interesting. The commission only referred to the year 1966; this is the only year for which we have any statistics. The deficit in that particular year was \$900,000.

My colleague, the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate, has referred to this. I am not going to repeat his argument because I do not believe \$900,000 is that much, especially in view of the fact that the hon. member for Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador said the railway carried 90,000 passengers that year. We are denied, however, the same type of statistical information for the years 1949 to 1966 inclusive. I should like to know, if we are to have the figures for 1966, why we could not have them for 1964, 1965 and so on.

While we are on the subject, I should like to see a comparison of that deficit with the deficit of Canadian National Railways in the province of Prince Edward Island. Surely it is reasonable to suggest that the Canadian National does not operate at a profit, and certainly not the rail passenger service in the province of Prince Edward Island. I should like to know also about the deficit in Nova Scotia in respect of providing rail passenger service. How much was the deficit incurred by Canadian National in operating rail service in the province of New Brunswick? I could go right across the country. How many rail passenger services in this country operate at a profit? Why single out the province of Newfoundland?

Well, Mr. Chairman, I suspect a little bit of skulduggery; I suspect a little collusion. This has been referred to by my colleagues. The government acted in this way in the province of Newfoundland because they thought they could get away with it. Indeed they felt it was politically expedient for them to do so. I submit to the Canadian National, through you Mr. Chairman and whatever minister in the house is answering for Canadian National, that this railway would not dare abandon the rail passenger service in Prince Edward Island because they know the government of Prince Edward Island would object so strenuously they would not get away with it. I further submit the government would not dare abandon the rail passenger service in the province of Nova Scotia for the same reason, or the province of New Brunswick for the same reason. However, the same criteria could be used, the same argument could apply. Anyone who looks at the map of Prince Edward Island will be able to see readily that the Canadian National rail line

Canadian National Railways

carrying passengers across that island parallels the highway. However, we did not hear of Canadian National abandoning their passenger service in favour of a bus service in Prince Edward Island.

• (4:30 p.m.)

They know they could not get away with it. The same argument would apply in Nova Scotia. Anyone who has travelled from Yarmouth to Sydney knows that the trans-Canada highway parallels the railway all along. Do we hear of the Canadian National Railways applying to the transportation commission to abandon their rail passenger service in the province of Nova Scotia and to substitute for it a bus service? No. The same applies in the province of New Brunswick. I am not too familiar with western Canada, Mr. Chairman, but I would suggest that the same argument applies to the western provinces as well.

Therefore I come back to my question: Why pick on Newfoundland? Why deprive us of what is the right of every other Canadian? I do not think it unreasonable to say—and this is the sum total of our argument—that until the government and its agency brings in a general policy of abandoning rail passenger service right across the country, we in Newfoundland will oppose this measure with all the strength that we can muster.

I also hope, Mr. Chairman, that we will have an opportunity to question the officials of the C.N.R. about this matter. I would not want to be unreasonable; we genuinely want answers to our questions. I should like to question the Minister of Transport about the suggestion that there was a deal between the government of Canada and the government of Newfoundland, which was on a political hook in that it was committed to completing the trans-Canada highway in two years but did not have the wherewithal to complete it in ten years. It is said that the government of Newfoundland told the federal government that if it would get them off that hook and agree to complete the trans-Canada in Newfoundland, the Newfoundland government would acquiesce in any move the federal government might make to discontinue the railway in Newfoundland, as a result of which it would probably save \$1 million a year.

We should like answers to these questions, Mr. Chairman. Newfoundland became a province of Canada in 1949. The parliamentary secretary need not smile at that; I am not talking about ancient history but about 20