

*Supply—Transport*

ask the minister to check into that point, in addition to the others I have mentioned. Those are the only remarks I have to make at this time.

**Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway):** Mr. Chairman, I would like to take just a few moments of the committee's time to urge a suggestion on the Minister of Transport. It stems from this business of curtailing passenger service, about which we have heard a lot in the last few days. I think it is a very wrong and mistaken time to be talking about curtailing passenger service just when we are entering into an age of leisure, when hours of work are being shortened and holidays lengthened, when people are needing ways and means to use their leisure well and to good purpose in their lives.

● (8:40 p.m.)

This is no time to take off the "Dominion" or curtail the services in other ways. After all, the running of passenger services on railways may not be profitable but we must have these services. Just the same in collecting garbage: This is not profitable, but it is a service which people must have and it is up to us to see that it is carried out. If the C.P.R. does not feel it can carry on with its passenger services the government should have the courage to force that railway company to stick by its bargain. If it will not run passenger services, in exchange for all the profitable enterprises it now has, there is no choice for the government but to take over the profitable as well as the unprofitable operations to ensure that we have passenger service in this country.

There are a great many people in this country who are retired on old age pension to whom travel is a very important facet of their leisure pastime. As an example of what can be done for these people, let me refer to what has happened in Norway. In that enlightened country the government pays half the fare of an elderly person travelling around the country, because it considers travel to be one of the best ways to encourage the elderly people to use their time. There is on the order paper at this time a motion which suggests that the government should go the entire way and pay all the expenses of elderly people who are travelling. I would be content to see this government adopt the practice followed by the government of Norway, going halfway to pay the travel costs of our elderly citizens.

Mr. Chairman, anyone who has studied the needs of elderly or aged people will realize that there is a need to provide a means by which elderly people can remain alert and live out their remaining lives in something other than loneliness. In the city of Vancouver the hydro company there sponsors mystery tours on buses around Vancouver and its environs at very reasonable rates during the seasons of the year when weather will permit. I know that a great part of that traffic is composed of elderly people who take advantage of these very reasonable rates to get a change of scene and some form of relaxation during this twilight period of their lives.

If the Minister of Transport wants a trite phrase, let me suggest that we institute travel subsidies for senior citizens. This could be a very important form of relaxation for those who are elderly and aged. It would give them a great deal of interest and new experience. It would enable them to visit their children and grandchildren, and many of them are not able to do this today. This would also keep our elderly people in the main stream of life during their final years. I urge the minister to give serious consideration to this suggestion. If Norway can afford this kind of policy I do not see why Canada cannot afford it. One of the troubles with us in this country is that we are too isolated and seem to think that because a great many people live here in an affluent society, everyone enjoys this position in life. That is a wrong concept, and as long as we have one quarter of our people living in poverty it is up to us to find ways and means of lessening that poverty.

I hope the minister during the course of this debate will tell me whether there is any reason why this country cannot adopt a policy such as I have suggested. Certainly from the standpoint of increasing the popularity of his government this would be a sure-fire method, and would at the same time make it possible for our aged to mix with their contemporaries across this country.

**Mr. Peters:** Mr. Chairman, I have listened to this debate for some time and do not intend to repeat those things that have been said. Two subjects that have been touched upon have caused me some surprise. The first is the lack of government initiative to establish a national transportation policy in Canada. I understand the minister is going to remain in his present position only until new transportation legislation has been introduced, and legislation concerning two or