

*Canadian Centennial*

which is a means of communication and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre himself listed a number of services which he would like to see improved. I think he emphasized the fact that in connection with this celebration we should do something more concrete than merely setting off a lot of fire-crackers and our efforts should be directed toward and take the form of an improvement in the standard of living, communications and all of the fields affecting our fellow men. It is with that in mind that I present this suggestion to the government at this time.

The hardships which my constituents in this area have to undergo are really indescribable. I have seen people standing up all night exposed to rain and the elements with no shelter whatever. I heard of a man who had to wash his child's face in the morning with a handkerchief dipped in salt water. The accommodation on this ship is really a disgrace not only to the Canadian National Railways but also to this government and to Canada itself. If we are going to make any progress towards improving the service one requirement will be a change in the Canada Shipping Act in order to set up minimum standards of accommodation on ships that carry overnight passengers.

What I have said up to this point is no reflection whatever upon the captain or the crew of that ship. There are no better seamen in the world and it would be difficult to find kindlier individuals. I know from personal experience the tremendous handicaps they have to undergo. I have seen them give up their beds in the night to accommodate women and children who had no other shelter. I have known from personal experience that the captain has not gone to bed from the time he left port on Monday morning until the following Wednesday and I have seen him leave port on Wednesday night and not get to bed again until Friday. There is no ship in the Canadian National Railways service travelling more continuously than the particular ship to which I am referring at this time.

Some time ago I asked a question in this house of the Minister of Transport as to when we might expect some improvement in the service given by this ship and he was good enough to reply some time later that he had discussed the matter with the management of the Canadian National Railways and they were hoping to improve the service in the near future. Shortly after that this old tub ran aground and we hoped this would be the end of her career as a passenger ship but I see from recent press reports that she is

[Mr. Carter.]

now undergoing repairs and the intention is to reinstate her in that service. The continued use of this boat in that particular service is a prime example of man's inhumanity to man.

It has reduced my constituents not to second-class citizens but to tenth-class citizens. Such a service is not given by the Canadian National Railways in any other part of Newfoundland, nor in any other part of Canada. It would not be tolerated in any other part of Canada. I doubt whether there is any service to parallel this one in the degradation of human beings to be found anywhere else in the civilized world. For the past eight years I have protested directly to the Canadian National Railways in the railway committee room and in this house against this discrimination but all to no avail.

I may say, Mr. Speaker, there is no excuse for the Canadian National Railways refusing to improve this service. I have been looking back over the files and I found that as far back as March 30, 1950, when I was a member of the railway committee and a bit of a greenhorn around this place, I submitted a brief to the railway committee which was printed as appendix B, pages 270 to 275, of the proceedings of that day. I should like to read the last paragraph of the statement which preceded the list of questions which I put to the management of the railway. It reads as follows:

Either the top management of the Canadian National Railways are not sufficiently conversant with the nature of the problems and difficulties and the special requirements that are needed to effect an improvement, or else they are not sufficiently sympathetic. We all know that re-organization and improvement take time, but a year has already passed and the conditions described above have not been alleviated, and it is necessary to start at once in order to achieve improvement in two or three years time. It is for the express purpose of bringing to the attention of the Minister of Transport and the top management of Canadian National Railways the special needs and requirements of our Newfoundland province, as well as to ascertain what progress has already been made in meeting these requirements, that I now table the attached questions.

Then followed the whole list of questions requesting information about the service. Then, again, on April 20, 1951, when I made what was supposed to have been my maiden speech in this house, I touched on the matter again. Hon. members will recall that my first efforts on the floor of this house were in support of my then colleague, Mr. Gordon Higgins, who represented St. John's East, and sat just about in this place on this side at that time. He introduced a bill about turrs, a seabird with which we were concerned at the time, and I rose in my place and supported his request, but that happened to