

Canadian National Railways and Air Canada

dents in this country. I hope that instead of unintentionally and unwittingly contributing to an expansion of that serious and tragic number of deaths by simply permitting and encouraging the expansion of auto traffic, we will begin to think in terms of expanding our passenger railroad service.

I am thinking of the way in which, at present, everything is done to discourage the ordinary person from taking a train. It is the same with our buses. But let us for the moment focus our attention on trains. If you want to take a passenger train to the cottage country today and take it home again, you have to spend most of the weekend in the train. The service is so slow, so inadequate, that a person has to be going on a really extended vacation even to consider taking a train to that holiday resort country.

● (1620)

Now, if in those bad old days when people were not supposed to be as developed, as up to date and advanced as we are now, it was possible to transport thousands of families to the cottage country holiday resorts by train and comparable public transport, surely we can do it today. And it makes sense. At a time when energy is supposed to be in short supply, at a time when the gasoline motor is supposed to be contributing to pollution, at a time when the threat of death is a constant danger to every car user on the highways in our provinces, surely we can begin to think in terms of a public transport program that will make sense in this age.

I welcome very much the opportunity this debate has given to various members to bring to bear on the government the concern of people across the country that the railroads, which were built to serve people, will do precisely that and once again they will be, even as when they were built, serving the people of Canada.

Mr. Terry Grier (Toronto-Lakeshore): Mr. Speaker, I just want to comment briefly on one aspect of the problems connected with transportation in this country, and that is an aspect which is of particular concern to the municipality, part of which I represent here. Through the southern part of Etobicoke runs the main Canadian National line westward from the heart of Toronto. The line is used not only for the railway's freight traffic and such ordinary passenger traffic as there may be, but it also serves the GO Transit, the GO train system. There are located on this line the marshalling yards at Willowbrook. For several years there has been a rumour that these yards, the facilities contained within them, indeed the line itself, will be expanded, particularly if the GO train system itself is expanded. And as the railway facilities now located in and around Union Station are moved out of that area to make room for the Metro Centre development, the politicians and the planners in the borough of Etobicoke—I am sure I am describing a problem which is encountered in other municipalities in Canada—have been trying to ascertain for some time whether or not there is any truth to the rumour of expansion and, if so, specifically what kind of expansion is planned by Canadian National, in what directions, according to what time schedule, and so on. The concern of the borough of Etobicoke is, of course, one prompted by its own plans to proceed with

[Mr. Stackhouse.]

various kinds of urban renewal or development in areas bordering on the right-of-way.

At the present time, I know that the borough of Etobicoke is considering proposals to maximize the use of land in the vicinity of the railway lines for family living, either in the form of housing or by using the land closest to the line for parks. There has been discussion of possible relocation away from this area of industries whose current uses are incompatible with family living. There has been discussion of the reconstruction of streets and arterial roads which intersect, pass underneath, or above, or run parallel to the railway line.

There have been efforts in the past, and there are ongoing efforts, to control noise and noise pollution in the residential areas bordering on the rail line. There is a continuing consideration of development proposals whose location may not be directly adjoining the rail line, but whose eventual approval or otherwise is bound to be affected by the kind of transportation which can be provided by the railway.

The point of my interjection, Mr. Speaker, is simply to say, through the opportunity provided by this debate, that I urge the Canadian National to co-operate more freely and more openly than it has in the past with municipalities whose own plans are so closely tied into and are affected by the plans of the railway. I think it is self-evident that more co-operation with municipalities in integrating plans for rail line development and expansion with plans at the municipal level is helpful and that it can only work to the benefit of both parties. But for some reason there appears to be an over-concern with secrecy on the part of railway officials.

I do not know whether it is because they have plans they are not anxious to divulge, or whether they are in the process of developing plans which have not yet reached the stage of finality, or whether they have not got any plans at all and are embarrassed to admit it. Be that as it may, Mr. Speaker, I believe a greater degree of candor and frankness in dealing with municipal planners, municipal governmental authorities in Canada, would go some way towards improving the quality of life in the areas directly served or intersected by railway lines, particularly major rights-of-way, and would, as I said, work to the benefit of both the railways and the municipalities.

The hon. member who has just spoken has cited the expressed wish of railways to be of service to the community, and he has expressed some doubt as to whether they are fulfilling that objective. I think one way in which railways can be of service to the community, albeit, an indirect way, is to co-operate more freely and more frankly with municipalities in working out a total plan of development for a community which will make it a better place in which to live.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): The question is on motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: No.