

*Canadian National Railways*

many years we saw some retired employees of the CNR living in conditions that were absolutely unnecessary, on a pension that was highly inappropriate, before the CNR realized that something should be done.

The recommendation of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications with regard to people who are already on pension has now been accepted. I, along with others, congratulate the committee for making this unanimous recommendation and for being able to convince the CNR and the Minister of Transport to make the increased pension a reality. Under the new scheme the retired employees will enjoy greater pension benefits. The same will be true with regard to the widows of deceased CNR employees.

I should also like to say that in the future I hope the CNR will be more responsive to the wishes of and recommendations made on behalf of its employees and pensioners than they have in the past. This is something of which they should take heed: they should set an example to other corporations both private and public in dealing with their employees. I think that once senior citizens retire from work they should no longer have to worry about financial problems and they should be able to live in security. These are the people who have laid the foundations of this country, and in western Canada they are the pioneers who opened up the west.

As I said before, I welcome the increase in pensions and the decent break that CNR pensioners will finally have. Many people have suggested that much of the credit should go to the committee which came out with a unanimous recommendation to this effect. I too would like to add my voice to those who have congratulated the committee. But first and foremost I must congratulate the pensioners and employees themselves who for so many years have been determined to put their case forward and have finally convinced the CNR and the minister that they have a case.

In my own constituency there are some 600 CNR employees who have for years petitioned and prepared briefs which they have sent to the CTC, the CNR and the minister. Finally these efforts have paid off. I know that when the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications was meeting and considering making recommendations on the pension, these people were there submitting their briefs. I think they are largely responsible for finally convincing the CNR that they have a case. I would like to join other hon. members, such as the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Skoberg), in congratulating these people for their determination.

The CNR is a Crown corporation that should be operating to serve the people of this country. A debate such as this gives us an opportunity to look at the different things the CNR is doing or perhaps should be doing to broaden its service in Canada. In the speeches made by hon. members earlier today and on other days many shortcomings have been pointed out. For example, the hon. member for London East (Mr. Turner) informed the House of many things to which people who sit in the seats of power should listen and take heed.

I myself, coming from Saskatchewan, am very concerned about many of the pressures that are put on the

[Mr. Nystrom.]

CNR and indeed on the CPR. I am very concerned about the many pressures upon the transportation systems to centralize. Here, of course, I am talking about pressures to abandon rail lines and railroads which are not used as much as are some of the main lines. I am very concerned about the pressure to abandon passenger service in many parts of the Prairies. I am also concerned about the pressure being exerted by the CNR on the CTC to eliminate the station agents in small centres, towns and cities of Saskatchewan.

I am concerned about these things because I think it not only creates a great deal of difficulty for the employees but also the people in rural Saskatchewan and other parts of rural Canada, because it is only expediting what is happening in rural Saskatchewan, that is the movement of people from farms and small towns into cities. All of us who are from that province agree that there are already too many ghost towns in Saskatchewan. What is happening is that a whole way of life is being challenged, and moves such as those contemplated by the CNR or indeed by the CPR only expedite that trend in our province. I think this is a trend that should be reversed.

I would like to spend two or three minutes talking about our general transportation policies and perhaps making a few suggestions as to what should be done. As I watch the people in charge of transportation in Canada today, I cannot help getting the impression that they do not really have an over-all transportation policy. What I see is a piecemeal, ad hoc approach to transportation. We do not have the over-all planning that I think is so necessary in a country as large and as diverse as Canada. I think we must have a national transportation policy with a top priority of being of service to the Canadian people no matter where they live, whether it is in Newfoundland, the Prairies or western Canada. Our transportation policy must be responsive and sensitive to the needs of people in all parts of Canada.

• (8:20 p.m.)

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we must have an efficient transportation system and one that can operate cheaply so that every Canadian, no matter where he lives or what type of money he makes, can use the system any time he so desires. When we evolve a proper transportation system in this country we must keep in mind things such as pollution. The automobiles on the road today are one of the greatest contributors to pollution. When we evolve a proper transportation system it must be one that lessens pollution and not increases it.

It is the duty of Members of Parliament on both sides of the House to keep pressuring the government, the CNR and the CTC to formulate immediately a plan that will intelligently organize and co-ordinate national transportation services in Canada. This must include all types of transportation, not just the railways but automobiles, airplanes, bus transportation and what have you. Perhaps I could spend one or two minutes talking about the problems that are involved in some of these other areas.

The bill before us concerns Air Canada as well as the CNR. In the Prairie provinces a great deal of the air