

*Transportation*

at present. This would not involve extensive outlays and would probably prompt both railway companies to provide an adequate service in the area I represent which numbers from 350,000 to 450,000 inhabitants.

Mr. Chairman, I suggest that the service is rotten all along the line. It is not the fault of the service agents who are doing their best in hopeless conditions. The staff is reduced, trains are cancelled and the cars are dirty. The railway stations in the province of Quebec are in a shameful condition. I am not speaking about the other provinces, because I know my colleagues will want to do so. Some of those stations would never be tolerated in cities; they would be considered hovels. I am of a certain age, Mr. Chairman, but I think a few of those stations have never been painted in my lifetime.

It will soon be the time of Expo; we are going to invite millions of visitors and show them along our railway lines, hovels used as stations and surrounded by dumping grounds. We could at least cut the grass, prune trees, paint buildings if we do not want to rebuild them.

I would say that the Board of Transport Commissioners should have a lot more power to control those public companies which have taken the cream of the natural resources of Canada. They were granted so many things that they grew rich, but now they have to meet some public obligations, they refuse to do so.

Mr. Chairman, I would have many things to say on this matter, but I know some of my colleagues would like to make a few comments. Some hon. members have already expressed their views and by repeating unnecessarily what has been said I would only extend the debate. However, I just want to point out that, in most railways, I think labour-management relations have been pitiful up to now, but some provisions in this bill will tend to improve those relations and boost employee morale sufficiently to ensure passenger service with a smile.

Mr. Chairman, there is another important matter to which the Board of Transport Commissioners could give full consideration, and that is the trucking industry. It is up against a kind of competition that trucking companies feel unjustified, since railways are receiving grants which, of course, are not available to trucking firms and which place the latter in a most difficult position.

Mr. Chairman, I think we should look into this situation, because the trucking industry

has its justification. The private companies who have set up truck transport, incurred the risks, invested the funds needed, and they are not very happy with the competition of railroad companies, which obtained from the Canadian government or the Canadian people all the privileges we know—which they placed in other companies that they now operate to enrich a large number of their directors.

Then, they demand subsidies to compete against private enterprise which tries to meet the needs of the Canadian economy. The Board of Transport Commissioners will need the authority, the will, to straighten out that situation.

Mr. Chairman, I note that the bill tends to standardize the various provincial legislative measures on transport. That, I think, is wise. When one is familiar, for instance, with the type of jungle found in the U.S.A., where each state has its own laws, where it is practically impossible for transport companies to give decent service because of wide differences in their respective governing legislation, I feel it is wise, with all due deference to those provincial ministers of transport who think differently, for the government to assume its responsibilities and ensure trucking some kind of uniformity, in order to avoid the expensive complications which lead to delays and are detrimental to our Canadian economy. I will not go so far as to advocate, in a definite way, perhaps, that truck transportation should be subsidized also, but I believe that this industry is faced with problems which must be examined and considered carefully, at least so as not to favour competition.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission—I do not know whether this is in order—I still have a few remarks to make, but I see that the Minister of Public Works and house leader (Mr. McIlraith) would like to ask for the unanimous consent to take up another measure. I am prepared to resume my seat, provided you agree to recognize me again upon resuming consideration of Bill No. C-231, because I would need about five minutes more.

[*English*]

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I should answer the hon. gentleman now and say that we propose that this measure will be before the house tomorrow when he will have full opportunity to continue his remarks. I want to thank him for his courtesy in enabling me to rise now. I wonder, Mr. Chairman, whether I could ask the committee to rise,