

Railways and Shipping Committee

Mr. Howard: It does not operate under steam, no. They have a ship. It operates up and down that coast no more than three or four months out of the year. For the balance of the time, Mr. Speaker, it stands in mothballs accumulating deficits or losing money or whichever way the Canadian National want to classify it. This approach of the Canadian National—whether it is influenced by this policy of the government or whether it was influenced by the policy of the last government is something that I do not know—or this attitude of the Canadian National in not making available the full facilities that it should make available from the shipping point of view to the coast of British Columbia has resulted, first, in this particular boat piling up losses or piling up deficits; and, second, completely insufficient shipping facilities on the coast of British Columbia. I hope that the committee, in dealing with these things, will have some influence upon the Canadian National so that they will expand their shipping facilities on the coast of British Columbia so as to be able to embrace the entire passenger-freight shipping facilities on the coast and will bring some sense and some equitability to the situation which exists.

I have one other comment to make about Trans-Canada Air Lines. I mentioned this matter on another occasion in another place and I asked a question about it in this house on one occasion also. This comment also coincides with an attitude that the Minister of Transport used to have when he sat over here on the opposition side and which I think he still has. He is smiling, but I am sure he still has the same opinions. However, they may have been tempered somewhat by the responsibility of the office that he holds. Sitting in this house, Mr. Speaker, are many members who, with respect to availability to their homes, are not quite on the same level as are many other members. Those of us from the west coast, the mid-west and from the Atlantic coast are in somewhat an equal position when it comes to being able to keep in touch with the constituency, to return and visit regularly our families and friends, and to keep an eye on things generally. The proposal made by the minister when he was on this side of the house—and which I say he has certainly not abandoned—was that some provision should be made to balance the scale between the members from Ontario and Quebec particularly and the members from the extremities of the nation. This should especially be done inasmuch as we are progressing more and more into an air age when flying is becoming the predominant way of getting from one place to another. Some arrangement should be made

[Mr. Howard.]

in order that members from extreme points in the nation should be able, on a paid fare basis or some other basis, to get home at some time during the session.

I have no set ideas as to the application of this general proposal. Many suggestions have been made, one of which was that such an arrangement should apply outside of a certain radius from Ottawa and 500 miles and 1,000 miles have been mentioned as possible limits. I do not think that this is of too much concern to most hon. members. Another suggestion was made that it should apply in the same way as trip passes apply to employees of Trans-Canada Air Lines and that hon. members might be able to use that pass to fly on aircraft only when space is available and when no paying passengers are available to utilize space. I think that would be a generally acceptable and agreeable idea to hon. members who would like to participate in such a scheme.

It was also suggested that a direct payment by the treasury for transportation be made to Trans-Canada Air Lines once or twice during the year or during the session. As I say, I am sure most hon. members are not married to one thought, but we are certainly partial to the idea of being placed more on a par with our T to T members. I do not suggest that we should leave here via T.C.A. on Thursday night and come back on Tuesday morning every week, but I do feel that an arrangement should be made so that at some time during each session—every other month or something of that nature—we might be able to get home, see our families and friends and so on. Once one gets home, of course, it means that there will be problems to face with respect to one's constituents but these are most welcome and it would be an opportunity to keep in personal contact with constituents and in touch with matters concerning them.

I am not a member of this committee, but I hope that the committee members will deal with this matter at considerable length and will discuss proposals with officials of Trans-Canada Air Lines and with the minister in order to get the attitude of T.C.A. to the whole problem, to assess the question of costs and to assess the question of how many aircraft fly without a full pay load. As the minister knows, I have discussed this matter with him as a member of another committee. I trust the whole matter may be thoroughly canvassed so that we may be able to proceed with a view to allowing passes for trips to members from the eastern and western extremities of our country.

Mr. D. M. Fisher (Port Arthur): I wish to make a few succinct remarks on the point