

Committee on Railways and Shipping

of this country in the way of transportation but something that is recognized as one of the world's great transportation systems, is that it has been able to compete at every level with the Canadian Pacific. It seems to me that the Canadian National cannot afford to fall below the level of the Canadian Pacific in the treatment of its pensioners who have too little upon which to live.

I am not as sure as some hon. members on the other side seem to be that the pension scheme of the Canadian Pacific is all that they seem to think it is. I have in my hand here a copy of a brief presented by the Pacific coast C.P.R. pension association in which they press for a basic pension of not less than \$75 a month to those under 70 years of age and not less than \$60 a month for those over 70 years of age, the idea being that those reaching 70 years of age would automatically receive an extra \$40. As I say, I am not quite so sure that the pension arrangements of the Canadian Pacific are as admirable as some hon. members seem to think.

Mr. Knowles: Will the hon. member permit a question? He is referring to hon. members in the plural, but only two of us have mentioned it. Does he not recall that I indicated there were deficiencies in the C.P.R. plan, but that there is one point in it that the C.N.R. might take into consideration?

Mr. Philpott: I say that the time has certainly come when the Canadian National should examine this important matter in order to give justice to those who bore the burden of making that railway a success in past years.

There is one other consideration I should like to advance. These people constitute a minority, but their number is considerable. Some of that minority made up of former Canadian National employees who are drawing such a meagre pittance in the way of pension are at that low level of pension because of their war service. In other words, their war service made them ineligible for an adequate pension because of the salaries and wages they had received.

I wanted to add my voice to others who have spoken in the house to say that the Canadian National must compete with the Canadian Pacific on every level. This publicly-owned system of which we are all so proud should never fall below its privately-owned competitor in its humanitarian and just treatment of its former employees.

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Albert): Mr. Speaker, since no mention has been made of Canadian National (West Indies) Steamships Limited may I say that I hope this year

[Mr. Philpott.]

the committee will give its usual close attention to this phase of its inquiry. Last year there was considerable discussion of the West Indies fleet and while we did get some information I felt personally that a definite statement of policy should be made by the minister on behalf of the government as to future plans for the fleet.

We had laid before the committee careful plans for the railway itself in the way of new cars and new facilities, but as far as the West Indies fleet was concerned that was left on the same old year to year basis. I suggest that that is unbusinesslike and uneconomical.

We have had examples during the past year and recently of new demands for service, particularly on the east coast where there is a need for refrigerator ships. This type of service is necessary if our apples and fish are to compete in the West Indies market. Then in addition there have been demands generally for an efficient merchant shipping fleet. With this in mind I hope that this year we will have some statement about the future of this fleet.

Mr. C. W. Carter (Burin-Burgeo): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me to be most fortunate that the debate on this resolution follows the debate of yesterday on the development and decentralization of industry in which transportation plays such a vital role. In his excellent contribution to yesterday's debate my friend and colleague, the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. Fraser), showed that the economic life and welfare of our province is completely dependent upon our means of transportation. As the main transportation system of Newfoundland is government-owned, I feel I should intervene in this debate to carry on where my hon. friend left off yesterday and develop this theme a little more fully.

It is evident that we must plan now for the future. Time flies very fast and the future comes upon us almost before we are aware of it. The construction of the great St. Lawrence seaway and the setting up of the Gordon commission has shown that we are very much alive to this fact. In no part of Canada is planning for the future more urgent and more essential than in Newfoundland, because not only must we close the very substantial gap between our standard of living and that of the mainland of Canada, but we must also at the same time make confederation an economic reality. At the present time confederation is merely a political fact. It will become an economic reality only when Newfoundland has been fully integrated into the Canadian economy.

As we project ourselves 20 or 25 years into the future, we see that we can expect