

service. This service has only been in operation for two years at the most. Another press item reads:

Extensive damage was caused to a Canadian National bus early Tuesday when it skidded off the Trans-Canada highway near Notre Dame junction. The driver and five male passengers were uninjured.

It becomes all too evident as we go along that the CN is operating and has operated this service in Newfoundland since its inception on pure, sheer, absolute luck—and thank God for their luck. There was an interesting little editorial in the *Daily News* following the last accident. It is headed "The Bus that Overturned" and reads:

It is both natural as well as inevitable that any accident to a Canadian National bus must cause some comment and anxiety. This is particularly true among those who are far from convinced that the substitution of buses for passenger trains meets all the conditions for safety that is desirable in public transport, particularly under winter conditions.

There were only the driver and five adult male passengers on the bus that overturned near Notre Dame junction and all came out unscathed. But it might have been another matter if the bus had been fully occupied.

Statistics indicate that buses have become a popular means of travel and, to the extent that valid comparisons are possible, have been carrying twice as many passengers as the passenger trains in an equivalent period. They are faster and operate on more convenient time schedules.

But public safety is the primary consideration and road conditions at certain times are far from adequate. When an accident occurs, an inquiry should be held immediately to determine causes. At the same time the transport authorities ought to have a good hard look at the means by which recurrences of this kind of mishap can be prevented.

Apparently that editorial did not do much good, because despite many requests from me and my colleagues to the minister to have these bus accidents investigated, I think I am safe in saying that I have not received a report although they were always promised. I was told, "We will look into this and that immediately". I have heard my colleagues ask the same question but I doubt that they have received any answers. I do not have a file of all the accidents. These are just some I happened to pick up. This is a headline from the *Western Star* of April 4, 1970, "Storm Hits West Coast; Buses, Truck off Road." In part the article reads:

● (9:20 p.m.)

Two CN buses—515 westward and 502 eastbound—were blown off ice-coated roads between Port aux Basques and Tompkins early Friday, but a company spokesman said no one was injured. Three other buses made it through without damage despite winds of 80 miles an hour, gusting to 100, that lashed the stretch of road leading to Port aux Basques.

Passengers from the ditched buses were transferred to other vehicles, and one of the buses eventually got back on the road. The other, however, was still in the ditch late Friday afternoon.

Two transfer trucks and a number of automobiles were reported also off the road because of the high winds.

It is not the fault of the drivers; it is not the fault of the buses; it is the fault of the CN that would inflict this sort of service on the Newfoundland people.

A CN spokesman said that no thought had been given to cancelling services but added that late night buses would not pass over the dangerous stretch unless winds had subsided.

### Canadian National Railways

Bully for the CN! Here is another clipping from just before Christmas. The headline reads "Two CN Buses Involved in Separate Accidents." The story appeared in the *St. John's Evening Telegram* of December 21, and reads in part:

Two Canadian National road-cruisers received only slight damage during the weekend in separate traffic accidents.

There were no injuries and both buses are back in service.

A CN spokesman said an eastbound bus was blown partially off the road Friday morning on the Trans-Canada Highway at Wreckhouse, about 20 miles east of Port aux Basques. The 80 miles per hour winds blew the front end of the bus into a ditch but the rear of the bus stayed on the road.

The second accident occurred Saturday evening near Rushy Pond, just west of Grand Falls.

The spokesman said the driver of the bus was forced to strike two cars, parked on the side of the Trans-Canada Highway. He said the two cars which had a snowmobile between them were parked on the side and the driver was unable to swing out around them because of oncoming traffic.

By sheer luck, some of our Newfoundland people were not injured or killed. One of the most recent accidents concerned a bus carrying 28 passengers. I referred this story to the Minister of Transport and hon. members thought I was joking. On December 3 a bus with 28 passengers ran over an embankment. Any hon. member who wants to see a photograph of what occurred can come to me and I will show him one. Luckily, there were a few birch trees there, and the photograph shows this bus suspended over the majestic Exploits River in Newfoundland. Just a few flimsy birch trees saved it from falling into the river. I repeat, Mr. Speaker, this is not a joke. In answer to my question the minister said that he once had been held up in a train for three or four days. I asked him if he had ever been held suspended over the Exploits River in a train. Those 28 people had a miraculous escape.

Many of these incidents are never reported in the press. I know of some from my own personal knowledge. I was at the CN bus station at Grand Falls not too long ago when a driver came in from the west coast with a bus full of passengers. I do not blame the driver, but he was terrified. The Trans-Canada Highway is very narrow, especially in wintertime, and he had just lost a mirror from the side of the bus. He was driving at 60 miles an hour when a big transport truck whizzed by at 70 miles an hour and cleared the mirror clean off the side of the bus. The truck didn't stop. The driver was terrified. A matter of a few more inches and there could have been disaster. Mr. Speaker, anyone who makes light of this account that I am giving should make himself known in this chamber.

The Minister of Transport, our so-called Newfoundland representative in the cabinet, just a couple of weeks ago treated very cavalierly the last incident which was brought to his attention. A CN bus had been lost for some 12 hours in a Newfoundland snowstorm. The passengers had no water aboard, no food, no chance to sleep and no communication with the outside world. The story had it, although it is not included in the press report, that another bus went next morning to look for it and it, too, became lost for three or four hours.