

Provision of Moneys to CNR and Air Canada

So, the facilities, the branch lines and all the services that the C.N.R. could provide in our area are, in my view ridiculous, to say the least. At the same time, those who are not consulted on such occasions are asking us to grant them \$415 million without further explanation.

We all agree on the importance of this debate which causes some members to flare up every time it is held in the House, and rightly so, because the same problem keeps cropping up. Several studies have been made and we are always faced with the problem of financing C.N.R. and the C.P.R.

Whenever we asked for a better railway service in our regions, officials invariably answer that it is already too expensive and that passenger services are less and less important.

Although they always turn down our requests, they still ask us \$415 million without further explanation, only that the money will be used to improve the services.

The Canadian Transport Commission and the C.N.R. are clearly irresponsible and I should like to give an example.

Recently, I received petitions and resolutions from the councils of several municipalities in my area, urging me and others to stand up for those municipalities before the Commission which held hearings in the town-hall of Plessisville.

Yet, I received nothing from the Commission, although it had received copies of the resolutions passed by those various municipalities.

So when the Commission held its hearings in Plessisville, the members, paid by the taxpayers pay to represent them, could not do their work, although they had prepared briefs to put forward certain representations.

Therefore, I could not go to Plessisville, unaware that the Commission was sitting there on that date. Yet, I was prepared and had everything ready to try to present the other side of the story, which the Commission refuses to do.

I say that such a procedure is unacceptable, to say the least, and I am tempted to term it dishonest.

Several of my colleagues went through the same experience. As for me, I was and still am prepared to make representations for the stations of Dosquet, Fortierville, Princeville, Victoriaville as well as for the Villeroy-Deschailions line.

Such are the problems we face. I have been elected a member of this House, but another person could have been elected. Whether the Commission likes it or not, this is not the problem. As a matter of fact, the problem is that the Canadian Transport Commission should know that the people—who pay the \$415 million, the interest on them and the annual deficits—have the right to be consulted and to voice their views, through their members of parliament.

● (4:30 p.m.)

I protest against the Commission's way of doing things and I say that it is unacceptable. It drives me to question the rulings and recommendations of the Commission itself because, if, on the one hand, they have the nerve to ask for money and, on the other, they withdraw certain services without consulting the people, it goes without saying that some persons must take advantage of the situation and lead an easy life at the expense of the taxpayers who, through their members of parliament, are not expected to say anything about drafting the policies of the Canadian National Railways.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, it is well known that the Canadian National Railways must become increasingly important in Canada and must update their services. That company operates a difficult but exceedingly interesting business, and if it is to be successful, it must enjoy the co-operation of the public and the authorities.

So many nowadays run the CNR down that one wonders whether there are still some who travel by train. So far as the Commission is concerned, it does nothing to restore its reputation, and if it does—which I doubt—we know nothing about it.

So we can ask ourselves why we should vote appropriations for the CNR. And I am much in earnest when I say this because, clearly, if the Canadian National Railways do not have the co-operation of the administration, their operations will inevitably show a deficit.

That, as a matter of fact, is what has been happening over many years and that, apparently, is also inevitable. Proposals that we could bring forward are not considered and in order not to consider them we are not called upon to present them, and when the time does come to make them, we are not invited to attend the Commission's hearings.

Canadian taxpayers, through their taxes and their efforts, have contributed to the