

Supply—Transport

the house during those years called for something more to be done for these groups of people.

I say it is not good enough for Canadian National Railways to go on leaving on low pensions its retired employees, particularly those retired a number of years ago, whose pensions were based on wages and salaries of the depression years, or even of later years when wages were not such as they are now. This is not good enough in these days of affluence, these days of better pensions and the concept of retirement which we have at the present time.

These people are terribly in need; they are terribly concerned. They are hopeful. They keep writing letters to the minister, to the Prime Minister and to members in all parties. My files of correspondence from these people are voluminous. They become disappointed by the statements made by the present Minister of Transport. I simply say to him that he should not think this issue is going to die just by his referring it to Donald Gordon and saying the government does not have a direct responsibility. This problem is there as a moral responsibility of the government and this parliament, and I call upon the government to face up to this important issue.

So, Mr. Chairman, I leave these thoughts with the minister this evening. I suggest to him that the time has come to face up to questions affecting the C.P.R. and not just to listen to speeches. He must take the necessary steps. The time has come for a clear policy with respect to air navigation in this country. The time has come to pay a little more attention to the needs and rights of the people in the city of Winnipeg. The time has come for a better deal for retired employees of the Canadian National Railways. We want action now.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Chairman, I am sure the minister has come to the conclusion that this house is far from happy with the transportation policy of the government, or the lack of transportation policy of the government, as it exists at the present time. This point has been brought home repeatedly by various spokesmen in the house and therefore, as was the case with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, it is not necessary to belabour it at this time.

● (9:00 p.m.)

Not only has there been dissatisfaction expressed from within the house, but I am sure the minister is aware that responsible

[Mr. Knowles.]

leaders outside the house have also expressed some concern. The premier of Alberta, the premier of Manitoba, the mayor of the city of Winnipeg, the mayor of that important city of Brandon, have all been in communication with the government outlining in detail the problems of transportation in western Canada as they see them. This is in respect of all phases of transportation—rail, air, the seaway and even the trucking industry in Canada.

Just before I mention the few points I have in mind, I should like particularly to congratulate the hon. member for Winnipeg South who, in his maiden speech, has spoken most eloquently for the province of Manitoba and our peculiar problems in relation to transportation.

I should like to make a few suggestions to the minister as he deals, from day to day, with the problems that have come about as a result of the present attitude of the Canadian Pacific in respect of its transportation responsibilities in this country. It seems to me that during the past few years hon. members of the house have been fighting a rearguard action. I know the difficulty arises because the government has failed to act on the MacPherson report with proper expedition. As a result, the Canadian Pacific has been taking advantage of the delay and, by a slow process of attrition, has been eliminating transportation facilities in western Canada. This is the part of the country with which I am familiar. By the time we get around to discussing the MacPherson report, there will not be anything left to discuss.

Mr. Pickersgill: I should like to ask the hon. gentleman one question. How does he think that the implementation of the MacPherson report would have altered the situation with regard to passenger service?

Mr. Dinsdale: I am not dealing with passenger service at the moment. I was merely pointing out the fact that we in this house are fighting a rearguard action because of the delay in bringing before the house the recommendations of the MacPherson report, which would make possible a comprehensive discussion of transportation generally in the country. We have come at it by bits and pieces. We have to make use of the opportunities provided by the consideration of the minister's estimates, for example.

Now that the question has been raised by the minister with reference to passenger service, perhaps I can be specific in this regard. I have come to the conclusion, as a result of