

*Transportation*

situation, which has resulted in a kind of adverse condition for the Canadian economy and, in that connection, I believe the bill could be classed among all those bills of major importance which we have had the opportunity to consider during the present session and to which members of the house have made positive contributions, even though there may have been, here and there, a few partisan eruptions.

Mr. Chairman, I say this legislation is timely because, for one thing, there has been gross neglect on the part of the railways. But I will speak of that later. I should now like to point out, however, that much of my criticism does not apply to the C.N.R.

It seems to me that, in the last few years, the C.N.R. has progressed considerably thanks to the impetus it was given by its president, who is soon to retire, and a few of his fellow-workers. There was a time in Canada where it was said that the C.P.R. was endowed with an exemplary management, but things have changed since. The C.N.R. should now be held up as a model, while the C.P.R. should be severely criticized.

I presume, and I hope, that the minister, when appointing the members of the board, will want it to represent, first of all, the ten provinces, and I should like to specify, be representative of Quebec. Incidentally, I should like to explain to the minister, who on occasion has said that he could not lend himself to racism for personal reasons, that I respect those who from time to time protest in favour of Quebec. I am thinking of that category of people who, to my mind, are reasonable and full of good-will. Of course, I exclude my colleague for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire). I am referring to those who, back home, prove their goodwill. Those protests are made with a view to reminding the minister that national unity will not be achieved unless those legitimate demands made by Quebec are studied carefully, for they do not denote racism but rather an instinct for self-preservation. Now, those people want to exchange views with all Canadians in all provinces, but, of course, they are not ready to do so at the cost of their survival, from the cultural point of view and in all other respects. I emphasize this, sir, because a bill brought forward by the government contained a list of English speaking persons only; no French speaking people had been included. I do not admit that there is not at least one competent man within our ranks in that field. Again, I do not blame the government, but I would

[Mr. Mongrain.]

like my criticism to be taken as constructive criticism. I know that the government is well disposed in this regard, as they have shown in many circumstances, and I simply want to draw their attention to this matter.

Therefore, the commission should be representative of the ten provinces; it should include people of unquestioned competence, for it will have a tremendous job to do. It will have to deal in particular with some cases of evident neglect and with some railways which abolish without qualms passenger train service under the pretext that it is uneconomic when they have secured from the government, as everyone knows, untold benefits. They even succeeded in diverting their interests in a multitude of companies and they give everyone the impression at the present time that they want to keep only those undertakings which are truly economic and get rid of those which are not but serve the public. And yet when they obtained those services, they promised the government that they would give such a service.

● (8:00 p.m.)

For instance, take the cancellation of the Montreal-Quebec train which, in my opinion, was absolutely unjustified. People who live in the cities and localities between Montreal and Quebec have been making representations ever since it was cancelled. Representations were made in the provincial legislature; some were made by chambers of commerce and city councils, but the C.P.R. turns a deaf ear.

Mr. Chairman, it is said openly—but I never saw the agreement myself—that some years ago, thanks to the services of a minister who was also a famous politician here in parliament and a lawyer for the C.P.R., some kind of agreement was allegedly reached by the C.P.R. and the C.N.R. to the effect that the C.N.R. would never serve Trois-Rivières and would never compete with the C.P.R. Such a situation, even though justified at the time—I am unable to judge, because I was not there—is no longer justified today. As a matter of fact, Trois-Rivières should be served by the C.N.R., if only to provide us with a better service than the one given by the C.P.R. and ensure a competition which is always sound in that field.

Mr. Chairman, it would be possible to establish such a service, because there is already a railway line going through a village called Charette, approximately 15 miles from our city. Our station could be used jointly by both railways, like the Ottawa station