

have a platform and they have that little chair sort of thing that they put on the station platform on which you step to get out on the platform. I sat there between those two railway cars and when the conductor came along he said "What are you doing there?" I said "Well, it so happens that they told me I am not going to get a seat. I have figured out the answer to that. I am going to put a few questions on the House of Commons Order Paper and eventually the CN is going to answer for this, "I began to scribble my questions on a pad. Then, the conductor, who happened to be a reasonable and bright sort of chap, said "You had better come back with me and sit down at my table and maybe we can talk this out." And that is exactly what happened. But in an enlightened day and age, when certain people running the CN knew there was a derailment between Ottawa and Montreal, they did not have the sense to tell any passenger on that trip that he should have taken the C.P. which would have brought him very quickly into Montreal with no trouble at all.

Perhaps this was the first time it had ever come home to me, but I am one of those who now believe that the railways are out to get their passengers, that the railways are now out to move all their business into the movement of chattels and goods, bulk carriers or simple carriers, with no regard for the movement of human persons from one part of Canada to another. I would not have thought, until that experience of about two weeks ago, that this was exactly what is going to happen. You may say it is paranoia or suspicion but that is exactly what I believe about the operations of the CNR and perhaps exactly what I am going to believe about the operations of the Canadian Pacific.

I agree with most of the speakers who went before me. It may be a very odd thing that members as disparate as socialist members and the hon. member from London, Ontario—I do not know what kind of member you would describe that as—or a member like myself, or a maverick Liberal, or a maverick Tory, or the like, should all share the same view with regard to the operations of the Canadian railways, but I think we all do and that surely must be some kind of tip-off to the people who run our railroads as to what we feel. I think perhaps we shall all share the same view with regard to Air Canada operations as well. These are some thoughts. The railways do have a tremendous public relations job to do, and I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, it is not an easy public relations job they have to do among the members of this House of Commons or among the members of the other place. I think the time has come when they have to do that public relations job with the public of Canada they are supposed to serve.

Mr. Richard: Perhaps I might interpose a comment. We have just heard a recital of a trip by train on that fateful day from the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave). I was personally involved because my young daughter, 16 years of age, was on her way to Toronto that day. She was told to be there at 5.10. She was there at 4.30. A little later they told her there was an accident and the train was delayed until 7.30 when it started for

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Toronto. Somewhere past Smiths Falls, in the darkness, the train stopped and remained there for many hours. There was no coffee, no sandwiches. It was dawn before they landed in Toronto the next morning at 6.15.

Mr. McCleave: I think that is a very good question. It certainly makes it clear there are really no political differences when we deal with the services of the Canadian National Railways.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, everybody knows the importance of exerting an effective control over the use of public funds. As a consequence, it is our duty to review the actions of crown corporations which, as is the case here, can spend these funds at the public's expense.

There is cause for concern about the adequacy of the programs established by the CNR in terms of public need and service. I entertain some doubts, Mr. Speaker, since for so many years we have seen a decrease in the service provided to the public by this company in terms of passenger service as well as in terms of freight transportation.

Obviously, the objective of a state owned corporation is not only to show profits. We recognize this and since the only objective is not profitability we must review all possibilities to provide adequate service to all areas of the country and particularly to those where this service is of vital importance.

There are, Mr. Speaker, some striking contradictions. For instance, at a time when we are speaking of decentralization, while we seek through the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, to help some areas somewhat less developed than others to rise from economic stagnation, we can hardly accept that the CNR should reduce its service to these areas. This is particularly the case in my region, the Saint-Maurice Valley and in the Quebec City area where I must say that the service provided by the Canadian National Railways is becoming less and less efficient; indeed, for all practical purposes, this service tends to disappear. This is why all the municipalities presently served by the CNR are up in arms and wondering what is happening and how far the CNR will go along these lines.

Mr. Speaker, we are not against progress and we do agree that if we manage, thanks to ingenious plans, to reorient and to reorganize our railway service, this will be so much the better if this can provide better service to our citizens. But we wonder whether there is an actual improvement in the service provided.

Is there not too many individuals more interested in setting up plans and creating new techniques than being exclusively concerned with the service? Is there not connivance between the Canadian Transport Commission and the CNR and even, in certain cases, the railwaymen union?

Mr. Speaker, let me explain myself: When new plans are introduced, when a new technical orientation is