

*Transportation*

● (2132)

I do not remember too much Latin, but there is one thing I do remember. I will not say it in Latin, but the English translation is: "I fear the Greeks when they come with gifts in their hands". I would like to update that quotation from Virgil. I think it should read like this, and I put it in the exhortative: "Mistrust the Liberals, especially when they come with gifts on their tongues". With all these misgivings I intend to take a risk and deal with a problem on which an election promise might very well be made. I will just have to take the risk, but once again I go back to that old expression which we see so often, and I will translate that to the occasion and say, "Cave, Canada,"—"beware, Canada". I will come back to that.

There are two problems about which I would like to speak tonight. One of them has to do with a railroad on Vancouver Island which has a long history of being shut down by the Canadian Transport Commission, started up again and shortened, and I think it may very well be lengthened. I suppose it goes back to 1905 when a grant was made to the CPR or to another company to establish a railway between Esquimalt and Nanaimo.

The E and N Railway had been in service in one form or another running from Esquimalt right up to Courtenay, and for some reason there was an interruption. The CPR claimed it would not be able to carry on the service any longer, and it asked if it could be discharged of its responsibility to run that particular service. Hearings were called by the CTC in Victoria. I, for one, made a submission to that hearing on March 8, 1976.

I had a variety of reasons for arguing against the closing of that particular service. My first reason for opposing the CPR petition stemmed from the legal obligation accepted by the CPR when it applied in the first instance to operate the railway, which it was prepared to accept in return for proprietary rights and a substantial grant of land by the Crown amounting to 1.9 million acres. That was what the CPR was granted in return for building and operating the railway. I thought that was a sufficient argument for it to go on operating the railway. It was supplemented, actually, by a rather philosophic argument connected with the relationship between the acceptance of a privilege, that is, the right to make use of the 1.9 million acres, and the performance of a service undertaken as a result of that acceptance.

There was a variety of other reasons which I brought forward, and I submitted them to the Railway Transport Committee. That was on March 8, 1976, and in July, the Railway Transport Committee ordered that the CPR reconstruct two bridges located at certain mileages in accordance with an annexed order, and so on. That was promptly done. The date of that order was July 28, 1976.

Then came the next step in the proceedings. The CPR finished the job. It built the bridges and prepared the railway for operation. Then, having heard from the CPR that in the year 1972 there was a loss attributable to the operations of the passenger train service of the order \$176,000, in 1973, \$190,-

[Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich).]

000 and in 1974, \$231,000, the Canadian Transport Commission ordered that, as of January 31, 1978, the CPR should discontinue the operation of the passenger train service, having previously instructed the CPR to build bridges and put the railway back into operating condition.

That, of course, was quite an extraordinary order. Freight was being transported on that line twice a week. It was carried throughout the whole service, but the transport of passengers was to cease. That caused the province of British Columbia to give notice that it was going to appeal that ruling. A letter to that effect was sent on December 27, 1977 to the chairman of the Canadian Transport Commission.

I too felt that that was not quite the way things should be, but with a little bit of pressure from the provincial government and letters from a variety of people, including several members of parliament from that part of the country, we managed, on January 20, 1978, to get the CTC to agree that the date should be changed to June 30. We are fast approaching June 30. June 30 may be a very important date, and this is why I have some fear about the conversion of this suggestion into an electoral promise, but there has been more pressure built up suggesting that this railway is required. The Regional District of Greater Victoria, for example, submitted a telegram to the CTC on January 18, 1978 indicating that the railway should continue. I too argued for that.

I was not aware yesterday when I was working in my office that I would be taking part in this debate, but I received a submission from one of my constituents, and last night I dictated a letter which I sent to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang), a copy of which was sent to the chairman of the Canadian Transport Commission, arguing that the June 30 date should be erased from the record and that the CPR should be ordered to maintain the service through the summer months until there is opportunity to have another look at this matter. I have this letter in front of me now.

I was puzzled as to why June 30 should be chosen as the date to close the railway. June 30 is just the beginning of the tourist season.

**Mr. Symes:** Election.

**Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):** I do not think it was known back in January when the extension to June 30 was discussed that there might be an election in or around June, but it is beginning to smell a little bit like that now.

**Mr. Benjamin:** They still don't know.

**Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):** That is true.

One of the arguments I advanced then—and I advance it again now—is that the timetable for the running of this particular railway should be more in tune with the needs of the communities up island so that people can come down to Victoria and go back on the same day. People from Victoria who wish to have a day's outing on the railway are able to leave in the morning and come back in the evening. That is not the way it works for people up island. The train leaves from