

*The Budget—Mr. Fane*

Incidentally, these people live on a rural route. How long did they get to find out about it? Darn little time. The letter continues:

—and that between May 1 and 9 a railway real estate representative called on each owner (with two exceptions) at least once to open discussions concerning settlement for the lands involved, crossings, etc. The reason for two owners being missed was that property of these owners adjoins the Sturgeon river and it was necessary to establish the total acreage required for the Sturgeon river crossing before opening discussions with owners involved.

Can you figure something like that?

Subsequently, the railway received letters dated May 16 and May 23 from Farm Surface Rights Consultants Ltd. to the effect that this firm had been appointed to represent 16 owners—

That number has now been increased to 21.

—(of the total of 23 owners involved). As recently as August 15 the railway was still awaiting word from Farm Surface Rights Consultants Ltd. as to when the consultants expect to be ready to discuss the matter of settlement (compensation, crossings, any relocation of roads, etc.)

The former minister of transport went on to say:

I am assured that every effort will be made by officers of the railway to effect fair and reasonable settlements with land owners concerned respecting compensation for property required for right of way for this rail line, including severance damage and any other damages that might be caused to land outside the right of way during the construction period. It would appear the next step would be for the land owners or their representatives to agree to meet with the railway officers concerned in Edmonton with a view to working out mutually satisfactory settlements.

Regarding the National Transportation Act, this legislation, which increased from 6 to 20 miles the length of a line which may be constructed without authority of a branch line bill, was introduced in parliament in August, 1966, well before there was any decision respecting construction of this rail line or in fact industrial development in this area.

Did the minister forget the difficulty he had getting that bill through the house? Did he forget the objections made by the opposition and how he callously rode over almost every important amendment proposed from this side of the house? The only one we were able to save concerned the Crowsnest pass freight rates. Has the minister forgotten so quickly, or does he think I can forget a thing like that when he writes a letter like this to me? It just is not very sensible. In a letter that I received either from the minister or the C.N.R.—I shall not take the time of the house to read it now—I was told it was a matter of expense, that they took this route to save money.

They were saving money by not going into Redwater, Gibbons, Scotford or taking a route a quarter of a mile north of the one they have taken. They did not take that route because of the additional expense involved. When they say this to me they make me see red. Another factor involved was the distance they would have to haul the products into Edmonton. It would have been shorter to haul them up to Redwater and along the existing line, out to Gibbons if they wanted to build a spur eight miles long, or down to Scotford where the line would be only five and a half miles long. It would take six miles of line if they were to build a “Y” junction there.

The building of a new railway will cause the Canadian National considerable expense, but they complain of the expense involved in completing the line from Heinsburg in Alberta to Frenchman Butte in Saskatchewan. They haul all the products of the salt factory at Lindbergh back through Edmonton. They haul all the wheat, all the grain and all the cattle back through Edmonton.

They should have completed that little bit of line years ago when they had the roadbed partially built and then abandoned it. Talk about saving expense. Whom do they think they are kidding? Not me, for sure, because I do not kid that easy. I do not believe them. This is a crooked deal. I do not want to get involved in any further explanation, because it is just not right and it is not sensible.

● (5:50 p.m.)

If there had been a practical person on the survey team, in the railway company or in the Department of Transport, surely he would have realized that it would not have hurt to build that railway line a quarter of a mile farther north along the road allowance where it would not have destroyed this good land and would not have spoiled the public relations between the Department of Transport and these farmers and between the Canadian National Railways, the Imperial Oil Company and these farmers.

It is too late now to do anything about it because the right of way is built. I did not know about it in time to protest against it and to have it stopped. However, had I known in time I would have taken a lot more time in the house and nobody would have been allowed to forget about the indignity that these people have suffered through the confiscation, the stealing of their land by Canadian National Railways. As I said before, the C.N.R. is a child of the government, it is