

bad, try again. That is the theory. What happens in practice is illustrated by the case of the Canadian National system. It has happened many times in the practice of the mythology of private enterprise. The entrepreneurs start on their own. They "con" people into buying shares in their ventures. Their friends buy bonds and shares. Large corporate financial institutions invest in those bonds and shares. The company gets government guarantees and then goes broke, as in the case of at least three of the railways in the early part of this century. They don't lose, they get their money. The groups who bought stocks and shares get their money, and the public pays.

This is what happens too often in practice. The people I am talking about are the first to yell about the value of initiative and private enterprise. But when they are in trouble, who runs to the government to be bailed out? They are the largest welfare recipients in the history of this country. When I hear some dinosaur complaining there is too much welfare available, too much public assistance, I cannot help being amazed, because the amount spent on public welfare is infinitesimal compared with the sums handed out to corporations who run to this government and who ran to the previous Conservative government to be bailed out. Any damned fool could be a private enterpriser under that kind of a deal, and a lot of people in Canada have been made damned fools of by bailing out these bankrupt corporations. And we are doing it now. The government to this day makes grants in the order of hundreds of millions of dollars to private corporations, the officers and boards of directors of which decry socialism and state intervention. What a bunch of nonsense! They are the first to go pleading for help. This applies to all the social aid cases who reside in boardrooms and have done so ever since this country started.

Canada's rail operations are handicapped because of the kind of national transportation policy under which they are working today and under which they have been operating since confederation. I wish to illustrate this point by drawing attention to some of the areas in which rail service has deteriorated or ceased altogether. All these things have gone on—the closing of railway agencies, the cancellation or curtailment of branch line services, or ceasing of schedule train services, which means the railways can run a train whenever they feel like doing so. With respect to certain types of freight and express traffic, railway services have virtually disappeared. As I say, all these things have gone on, particularly since the end of the second world war. The private enterprise railway was not interested. It wanted the gravy. It did not want to give a service. In the case of the publicly-owned railway, it had no choice because of the financial arrangements under which it had to work and the unfair competition which it faced. It had no choice but to decrease services; it was necessary in order to show members of parliament and the public generally that an operating profit had been made.

May I give a few examples? I suppose the most horrendous and the most recent was the application to close a total of 76 railway stations in Saskatchewan and Alberta in one fell swoop. Four members of parliament, an hon. member from the other place, mayors and town councillors from dozens of communities and representatives of

CNR and Air Canada

the province of Saskatchewan all appeared at three successive hearings in Saskatchewan opposing that application. The Canadian Transport Commission Railway Transport Committee handed down its decision a week or two ago. It chose to ignore or discount the representations which had been made to it, and granted permission to the railway to close these 76 agencies by the middle of this month. When I asked the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) whether he would get his cabinet colleagues to intervene and disallow this order, it was evident that he did not even know whether he could do so or not. I hope the parliamentary secretary will remind him that according to the act itself, the cabinet has authority to overrule the Canadian Transport Commission. This is the most recent example of the decisions we are getting from CTC, decisions which fly in the face of the needs of the Canadian public.

I want to be so brave as to read a little of the brief I presented to the Commission, outlining what I thought should be done to continue to provide service at those agencies while, nevertheless, reducing costs and improving efficiency. I am not suggesting for one minute that all 76 of those agencies should or could be kept open, but when one sees the railway wanting to close agencies in towns of 500, 1,000 or 3,000 people, it is obvious something is wrong. And when we see a docile transport commission agreeing to this proposal as rapidly and as easily as it did, here is more evidence that something is fundamentally wrong.

The claim by the Canadian Pacific, and latterly by the CNR, that the so-called customer service centres are giving better service and are resulting in more business is not borne out by any evidence which I, or any member of this House or the Canadian Transport Commission have been able to get. I submitted in my brief at the hearing at Wynyard, Saskatchewan, that if the Canadian Pacific Railway, for example, was correct in its assertion that in other areas of western Canada where customer service centres had been inaugurated dozens of agencies were closed, the customer service centres were in fact providing better services and resulting in more traffic, it was incumbent upon the railway to provide to the commission, to the public and members of this House the revenue earnings at each of the stations for forward and received, carload, less than carload, freight and express, number of telegrams sent and received, number of tickets sold and passenger revenue, before those stations were closed.

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Then, what we would like for the Canadian Pacific customer service centre in Regina, for example, is the revenue earnings, number of shipments for each of the stations now closed, what the revenue has been since they were closed and served by the so-called customer service centre. These figures can be obtained. It would mean that Canadian Pacific would have to put a lot of people to work going through every single waybill and ticket stub issued since the customer service centre opened. But I suspect very strongly that the Canadian Pacific railway have not kept those figures separate, that they cannot at this point in time tell us what the revenue is at each of the stations. This is very convenient from the company's point