

*Canadian National Railways*

continues today. In other words, the public had been made aware of it in time so that the weight of public opinion could be brought to bear on the decision.

I understand that the same plan is to be resurrected again. The manager of the Canadian National in the province has been transferred to a place a good deal further west. A new manager has been brought in and he, I imagine, now is looking at the over-all plan for the province. I want the Canadian National to give me a full reply to this question. Are there plans to eliminate the freight service east of Bishop's Falls? If so, these plans must be made public. There must be full public comment on them and a decision reached on the basis of the total and complete interest of the people of the province.

Again a few years ago under a different manager the wood trains were eliminated. A tremendous amount of pulpwood was hauled to two of the largest mills in Canada. Also the ballast trains were eliminated. They were used to service the lines. All these trains have been amalgamated into the one service which includes freight, wood and ballast. Consequently, this is the only service we have left in the whole province. As a result, there has been a tremendous downgrading of the activities connected with keeping the roadbed in order. I raised the issue through the Order Paper a few weeks ago because I was amazed at the almost uniform decrease in the amount of money spent on maintaining the roadbed and the uniform increase in the number of derailments. I cannot quote the figures but they are on the public record.

• (2:50 p.m.)

I wonder why we cannot have wood trains and ballast trains as well as an improvement in the freight service? The fact is that all kinds of complaints are made in my province regarding freight being delivered damaged, being delivered days after it was supposed to arrive, or being lost. Generally speaking, we must have the worst railroad system in North America. I have read about railroads in India and I would say that in many ways our railroad does not even compare favourably with Indian railroads. The situation is that we have lost our rail passenger service and now there is a tremendous downgrading of the freight service in my province. If we do not get some action on this problem, years from now the same thing will happen in other provinces of Canada because we are being used as guinea pigs. Many Newfoundlanders are not aware of this. Our people are relatively quiet people. We do not have liberation fronts as in Quebec or anything of this nature. Consequently, it is sometimes difficult for us to get our points of view across to the Canadian people so that we all understand what the problem is.

The railroad still exists in Newfoundland but we do not have a service, nor do we have an efficient bus service. However, I will not elaborate on the bus service. Two of my colleagues are present in the House right now and are quite capable of describing the bus service in Newfoundland. It embarrasses me to see all the advertisements on television describing the beautiful dayliner services and the beautiful dome cars in which you can drink your glass of ale while the sunlight streams

[Mr. Lundrigan.]

through the dome. We have 39 passenger buses. My colleague, the hon. member for Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador (Mr. Peddle), was saying that these 39 passenger buses have only one lavatory. If the CNR has its way in Newfoundland it is likely to advertise that it has 40 passenger buses. The situation is serious and critical.

I could recount stories that you would not believe about the way in which the public is being treated by the CNR. It is unbelievable. We are full-fledge Canadians, people who have the same rights as anyone in Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal, and we have been treated like cattle by the CNR bus service. Every single member of the House representing Newfoundland has received numerous representations regarding overcrowding, bad scheduling, and so on. I have heard stories of people being dropped off at junctions with not even a shelter. Sometimes there was not even a telephone to enable them to communicate with their communities. Passengers' baggage is sometimes undelivered and the passengers, after having found their way to their community, have had to go back to pick up their baggage.

I heard of the case of a group of students from one community travelling on a CN bus who arrived at a particular location only to find that their seats had been taken. These students were thrown off the bus, baggage and all. This was a group of young Newfoundland students travelling to a conference in Corner Brook. There have been occasions when people have gone to lunch during a stopover of 20 minutes or half an hour only to find later that their bus was gone. These incidents have been reported to me. On another occasion the bus was actually filled with other passengers and the passengers who had gone for lunch were left behind. There are all kinds of such stories.

It is unbelievable that the people of our province should have been treated the way they were by Canadian National. Why could we not have upgraded our roadbed and provided a dayliner system? We could have several small systems operating between Bishop's Falls and St. John's, Bishop's Falls and Corner Brook and Corner Brook and west of there. This could be arranged. I do not think cost would be a major factor. We are being asked to approve an expenditure of \$229 million by Canadian National. Members just accept this as a routine matter. We might get a response. I do not doubt that a month from now I will have to raise a question of privilege to receive a response to my request for an investigation into the operations of Canadian National in my province. This will be par for the course.

I say that I want a full investigation into the freight situation in Newfoundland. Are we going to see the elimination of the rail service altogether? Was the elimination of the rail passenger service just one step? We were guinea pigs once, are we to be guinea pigs a second time? Will there be an elimination of freight rail service altogether in my province? Are we going to have separate wood trains and separate ballast trains so that we can get a decent freight service at least? What plans does the CNR have to ensure prompt and efficient delivery of undamaged goods? These are the questions which I want