

*Supply—Transport*

Therefore, when we cancel a rail service in the maritime provinces, especially in northern New Brunswick where I happen to live, which encompasses the constituency I represent, it should not be done on the same principles and on the same bases as services are cancelled elsewhere in Canada because we have nothing else to replace it. We do not have an airport in all northern New Brunswick that could be used in an emergency. When you cancel the rail service from Edmundston to Riviere du Loup you put the people of that area at the mercy of the elements, and in many instances very serious consequences can result from the fact that people cannot get to hospitals, cannot get to specialists, and cannot get the services they pay for. In many instances that service is absolutely needed.

I say it is wrong to take any one particular line and say that because it is not profitable we are going to cancel it. Consideration should be given to the fact that in areas such as mine it is impossible to substitute this service with anything that resembles the degree of speed at which people can get from one point to another on the service provided by the C.N.R.

Another thing I should like to bring up is the fact that the people in Dalhousie, New Brunswick, for instance—I happened to be down in that area the other day and one delegation came to me and said: "Why is it that we have to travel by car almost 20 miles to Campbellton in order to take the train to Montreal? We have to pay a taxi fare of \$4, \$5, \$6 or \$8, when only a few miles from Dalhousie there is a station at Eel River at which the train does not stop; only one mile away there is an excellent station where the train could stop."

I do feel that with this area of management coming into being in many areas of Canada, especially in areas like mine, where more responsibility is given to local superintendents in the various towns, the service will increase for the better. I feel that once they can make decisions at the local level the people will be freer to present their problems to the C.N.R. and get immediate and favourable answers to resolutions.

However, there are many complaints at the moment, and when town councils take the trouble to send resolutions to Ottawa—and I must say I appreciate very much the very prompt attention and answer the minister gave to this resolution when it got here—the fact still remains that our people are unhappy about this service, about the cancellation of the service, about the fact that trains are being cancelled. If this line were used and was not producing a certain amount

[Mr. Van Horne.]

of revenue something could be said in favour of the policies of the C.N.R. The strange thing is that the C.N.R. does not have to go before the board if it merely curtails a service; it goes before the board if it means to do away with the service, as in the case of the Connors to Clair 11.6 miles of track.

For these reasons I feel the board of transport commissioners should be instructed that there should be a policy evolved and it should be made very clear that the board is not in position to cancel these things without taking every means to find out whether an alternate means of transportation will be available. The main purpose of railways away back at the time of confederation was to make sure that there would be transportation in Canada and that there would be a link between the east and the west.

At the time of confederation we had a natural advantage in the maritime provinces, namely cheap transportation by water. We lost that advantage when we joined confederation. We had to substitute that cheap transportation to our natural market in the West Indies and the New England states. We had to substitute that with rail because our markets were changed to central Canada, which did not prove to be successful for the industries of the maritime provinces.

Freight rates continue to be a crippling item in the maritime provinces, but I am very glad to see that the C.N.R. is at last taking some steps here to try to compete with truckers and with other modes of transportation. In some cases their rail rates are down to the point where they can compete today, as I mentioned a few minutes ago, with water transportation.

This makes the building of the Chignecto canal all the more important. If we go back in history we see that at the time of confederation it was very clearly understood by men like Sir Joseph Howe, and others who brought the maritime provinces into the Canadian confederation, that they were surrendering cheap transportation by water which could not be replaced by rail transportation. At that time the building of the Chignecto canal was more than a mere premise upon which our forefathers entered confederation. We have been waiting since 1867 for the canal. I certainly hope, in fact I know, that the studies in progress with regard to the canal will continue. I feel confident that a start will be made on building the canal next year. I certainly hope that nothing will stand in the way of building the Chignecto canal.

It is not good enough to expect the need to be present to the greatest possible degree before the service is provided. It is not reasonable for instance, to expect that a merchant