

*Provision of Moneys to CNR and Air Canada*

transporting thousands of people to Expo in Montreal. Many of them were visitors from the United States who travelled across Canada by train. In fact at that time the railroad agreed to bring back the old Dominion and place it in service once more. I believe it was called The Expo Special, and was necessary to meet the demand of the public for transportation. On looking at railway passenger statistics since 1967, I do not see that there has been much of a deterioration in the number of passengers carried by the main line trains.

We must look ahead to the day when our expanding population will make it mandatory for us to provide good transportation in areas that are presently not too well developed, so that instead of abandoning lines we should be doing our best to retain them. We must also take into consideration the new concept of a central Canada corridor, which is designed to stimulate industrial development all across the country.

Earlier this afternoon the hon. member for Simcoe East (Mr. Rynard) mentioned the problem of air pollution. So far as the movement of passengers is concerned, motor cars now represent about 83 per cent of the total traffic in this country. As the hon. member stated, the motor car is creating a major problem in large urban centres and, as a consequence, we must look to other means of transportation, including electric railways, to move people from one point to another in urban areas.

● (5:00 p.m.)

I was very interested in the address given last night by the hon. member for Thunder Bay (Mr. Penner), and particularly in the plea that he made for the community of Nakina. It reminded me of the rail line abandonment in my own area of Saskatchewan back about 1958 or 1959, when an application was made to abandon what was known as the Reston-Wolseley branch line. It was one of the first branch lines in western Canada to be abandoned. The concern that was expressed by the hon. member for Thunder Bay (Mr. Penner) last night was concern that could be expressed by dozens of members in this House if all those applications for abandonment now under consideration should be accepted by the Canadian Board of Transport Commissioners. All along these lines are communities almost wholly dependent on rail transportation. If the line is taken out it will

[Mr. Southam.]

be only a matter of a year or two before the residents have to pull up stakes, dispose of businesses at great cost to themselves and the communities, and move further afield to try again to make a livelihood. There have been examples already of communities almost drying up entirely.

This raises a twofold problem, Mr. Speaker, for the community and the people affected. The people have to leave the area and invariably they try to go to some of the larger and more populated areas, thus emphasizing and accentuating the problem of urbanization. In Toronto we have our urban problems and are wracking our brains to try to solve them. I do not think that moving from the rural areas to the urban areas is the answer. We must look also at the sociological problem that becomes apparent when we speak of abandoning railway lines in rural areas.

I could go on at length but I felt I had to make these few remarks and add my voice of protest against this present rash of applications for rail line abandonment. We should take the advice of other members who have spoken and look at this whole serious situation before it gets out of hand.

[Translation]

**Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-7 now before us proves that the CNR is running true to form and that experts in deficits are still on its payroll.

Whether services are discontinued, stations closed, employees laid off, trains cancelled or the turbo-train moves forward or backward, there is always a deficit.

In my opinion, this is a ridiculous situation, a colossal joke, since a bill like this one is introduced each year. Before giving a blank cheque to the Canadian National Railways by passing this bill, I would like, as suggested by previous speakers, to see a little analysis of that Crown Corporation made.

Let us recall first the economic recession of the years 1929 to 1939, a quiet period when economic stagnation brought about limited railway traffic. And yet, at that time, the CNR, administered by wise and able men, managed to buy deficit-making railway companies facing bankruptcy.

During the war that followed, this company rendered tremendous services. An unexpected growth in traffic led to the construction of railway cars and other equipment. In order to meet the demand from government and industry, all available trains were operating around the clock.