

*Canadian National Railways and Air Canada*

making the best use of all modes of transportation at the lowest possible total cost.

What happened? As the House well knows, members have been speaking on the subject, and speaking well, for a number of months. Certainly prior to the election of last October my predecessor representing my constituency along with many members of the House acted as spokesmen for the area—but to no avail. I do not think the minister has appreciated the reaction of the community. Those who represent the area no longer measure their mail in numbers of letters; they weigh it. I am sorry that I did not bring my file. I am sure my mail bag is no bigger or smaller than that of other members representing the area. I wish to quote from several letters to show the concern of my constituents. I will not bore the minister with reading all of them. I will read excerpts. First may I read part of letter sent by a senior citizen who is a constituent in Listowel, Ontario. He said, in part:

A great many residents here would appreciate it very much if you, as a member of parliament, could look into it and do something to improve our situation.

The second letter comes from Mitchell, Ontario. It says in part:

This service was hard-earned and paid for by our forefathers.

● (2100)

The following letter was received from the city of Stratford:

Please inquire into what has happened to the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Transportation in the House of Commons.

The following is from the town of Palmerston:

We are not asking for something that is not our right, or that we should not have. Therefore, why can't we have it? Your support is now requested to keep this concern before the government until action is gained.

The next is from the town of Listowel:

If MP's had to put up with all that . . .

This was written after describing the horrendous situation in getting from point A to point B.

. . . it would certainly be the first motion to come up—It seems, if you don't live in one of the major cities, or want to drive your car, one is just supposed to stay at home.

The next is from a rural area outside Listowel, in Perth county:

Last year my doctor made an appointment for me to attend the cancer clinic in Victoria Hospital, London. I found out there wasn't train or bus service to London so changed my appointment to Wingham and couldn't get there either—I am sure there are hundreds of people having the same experiences.

What has been the reaction of the Minister of Transport and the Canadian Transport Commission? Apparently there is a Canadian Transport Commission study. The standing committee recommended a trilevel study. The Midwestern Development Corporation recommended a tri-level study. Many members of this House did the same. We have a study by the Canadian Transport Commission: right off the bat, that is suspect. In my opinion, the CTC is part and parcel of a deliberate attempt to downgrade rail service in Canada. In any event, this CTC study, which has not been published although it was supposed to be some time ago, was to involve local consultation. I person-

[Mr. Jarvis.]

ally checked with four of my colleagues who represent constituencies in this area. Neither I nor they could find one local municipal official who was consulted. We cannot find anyone who was ever consulted. If members, not only on this side of the House but in all parties, from this part of Ontario are skeptical, I think it is with good reason.

This past spring representatives of the Midwestern Development Corporation came to Ottawa to meet with the minister. Circumstances prevented his meeting them, but they met with his parliamentary secretary. When I suggested that this was mere window-dressing the parliamentary secretary was almost at a loss for words. This astonished me. The parliamentary secretary took great umbrage at the fact that I would suggest this was just another bit of window-dressing for the Minister of Transport.

The second group of people for whom I should like to make a plea are the railroad employees. I suggest to the minister that the railway is engaged in a deliberate attempt to downgrade roadbeds and rights-of-way. The result is that many members of the operating union of the CNR are fearful for their lives. I do not want to be an alarmist, but I am consulted almost every week by members of the union safety committee. Incidents such as falling trees and almost impossible visibility are now the rule rather than the exception on certain lines north of the city of Stratford and, indeed, lines that go into the constituency of the hon. member for Bruce. Roadbeds are so poor that reduced speeds are also the rule rather than the exception. In an article in the June 21, 1972, edition of the *London Free Press* on the condition of the roadbed, the hon. member for Bruce was quoted as saying:

. . . claims that the rail lines in the area are in poor repair and unsuitable for service are unfounded.

"The lines are not nearly in as bad a shape as some people think" he told the committee. "I see freight trains going over them every day."

That may very well have been true in June of 1972. I have no knowledge of the situation at that time. However, I wish the hon. member were in the House now to update his report. Remember, that was 16 months ago. On the basis of honest and sincere evidence given to me by the safety committee of the railway union in that area, I suggest these men are operating trains in fear.

The final group for which I wish to speak are those people through whose property the railways have a right-of-way. It is very easy to go on at great length about weeds, fences, and so on. Rather than do that, I wish to give the House one example. It would serve no purpose to name the railway or the specific location, because the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) have my complete file on this. Their file is as current as mine as of a week ago. This is a situation that has arisen in two rural townships. The best way to summarize it would be to paraphrase a letter from the fieldman of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture reporting to members of the federation with regard to having a certain situation remedied in the area.

Between June 1 and June 6 of 1973, 11 requisitions for fence repairs were forwarded to the railway. Apparently this is how you initiate fence repairs when it is the railway's fence: a farmer sends a requisition to a district