

Committee on Railways and Shipping

crowded into this one room. Among the 54 passengers were four people who were unable to stand, but they could not get near a seat. There should be some way to accommodate passengers in that room so that they could sit down and rest while passengers from another plane are going through.

I mentioned the Malton airport two years ago. I will say that it has been cleaned up to some extent; it is very much better. That also applies to the Trans-Canada Air Lines facilities at Chicago. But they are not so good at Chicago that they could not be greatly improved.

I agree with the hon. member who has just taken his seat who said that we should have a little more competition with Trans-Canada Air Lines to improve the service. I know the employees of Trans-Canada Air Lines are doing their best, but there are delays. This has been mentioned. I know of instances where parties go to the T.C.A. office at the airport and show their tickets indicating that they have a flight out at such and such a time. The Trans-Canada Air Lines officer replies: "We have no record of it. You will have to wait for another plane or wait until all the passengers we have listed are on the plane and then we shall see what we can do for you". There should be a better method of checking. I was told on one flight that they had many hold-overs. I think they call them "holds". Passengers were listed from other transport companies, and they were holding the space whether people wanted it or not. They did not know, or would not know until the flight was ready to go. There should be a better check on passengers and tickets to see that the people who go to the airport are not held up there, or not told to wait for another day.

Hon. George C. Marler (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker,—

Mr. Speaker: If the minister speaks now he will close the debate.

Mr. Marler: Mr. Speaker, I shall try to deal with the more outstanding points that have come out in the course of the discussion of this motion. First of all, I am sorry not to see the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Macdonnell) in his seat. I would like to tell him through you, Mr. Speaker, that I would hope this year to make it possible to furnish the members of the committee with the accounts which they will be expected to consider in the committee, and to do so just as soon as these accounts have been tabled.

I fully appreciate the difficulty of the task of hon. members in going through the rather elaborate accounts of the Canadian National

Railways. I think in particular of the results of the fiscal year that is now concluded. I appreciate also the difficulties with regard to the examination that they would naturally wish to make of the budget of capital expenditures for the current year. I do not know how far we shall be successful in doing it, Mr. Speaker, but I shall do my best to try to make the reports available to the members of the committee just as soon as it can be done.

I would like to say also that so far as I am concerned, and so far as concerns the officers of the Canadian National Railways and of Trans-Canada Air Lines, there was not last year, and I am sure there will not be this year, any suggestion on their part that they wish to hurry through the discussion of the matters referred to the committee so that they could get back to other tasks. I think if there is any sense of pressure which is felt by members of the committee it is merely because they also have other duties to perform, and they are anxious to get back to their other duties.

I say this in no critical way whatever, Mr. Speaker, but it did seem to me last year that in the discussions that took place in the committee, in some instances undue emphasis was placed on what I thought were trivial matters when there were other matters of greater importance that might have attracted more attention on the part of the committee. I say that in no critical way whatever. I must say that so far as I was concerned—I was not a member of the committee—I was treated by those who attended the meetings as if I were a member, and I have no complaint whatever in that respect. But I did think there was an insistence on matters of detail which might have been avoided, and which would have left more time for consideration of more important questions in connection with the accounts.

When one realizes that the annual expenditures of Canadian National Railways are in the neighbourhood of some \$600 million, it naturally follows that if the committee is to pay much attention to small expenditures the work of the committee will be unending. At all events, Mr. Speaker, I do want to say I hope hon. members of the committee will not feel under any pressure whatever upon my part, or upon the part of the officers of these three companies, to rush through the work of the committee. I hope the committee will take such time as it feels is necessary to carry out the task that is entrusted to it under this motion.

The hon. member for Greenwood suggested this afternoon—perhaps I should not say "suggested" but canvassed—the possibility