

Transportation

and Nanaimo Railway Company trains 1 and 2 operate. It is ridiculous for the CTC to tell a transportation company to keep its stations open when its trains are running.

Fourth, they were told to remove all weeds and undergrowth from station platforms.

Fifth, they were told to provide sufficient accommodation on their railway cars so that people did not have to travel in the baggage compartment. If I told someone this type of thing happens in Canada today, perhaps they would say that I am referring to a third world country. Surely Vancouver Island is not a third world country. If E & N was interested in running a service, these elemental things had to be taken care of.

Following this, the CTC indicated that E & N could not stop its passenger service. The CPR said that it spent funds to upgrade its service and stations, as well as not put people in baggage compartments but actually allow them to sit on the seats. That may or may not be the case. In 1976, the same railway company applied to the CTC to do two things. The first was to discontinue freight service because the trestles going across gorges had fallen into such a state of disrepair that it was unsafe for trains to cross them. The second thing they were applying for was to have the passenger service discontinued once again. It is unbelievable in this and age to hear such stories.

The city of Nanaimo and its council recently sent me a telegram. It read as follows:

... by announcement that Canadian Transport Commission will permit the company to discontinue the E & N dayliner service on Vancouver Island and urge you to challenge the ruling of the commission.

I am not going to challenge the ruling of that Commission. I say that not because I agree with the ruling which came out, namely that because of loss of operating capital, E & N could shut down its passenger service. The reason I will not challenge it is because the course of action of a member of parliament is to petition the Privy Council to overturn that decision. I do not want to challenge decisions of the CTC, but in a recent letter which I sent to Mr. Pitfield, the Clerk of the Privy Council, I requested that under provision 641 of the National Transportation Act that order No. R25960 be rescinded.

Complications have arisen since that time. In the Supreme Court of Canada the province of British Columbia challenged the right of the CPR to discontinue its service, due to the fact that moneys and land were granted to E & N under the original construction grant in order to provide a continuous service on Vancouver Island.

Prior to challenging the decision of the CTC, the province of British Columbia should have contacted the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the Privy Council to determine whether they in fact would overturn the decision without going through a long legal process where normally lawyers are the only ones who come out ahead. However, in its wisdom the province of British Columbia decided to go through the Supreme Court of Canada. I think the question could have been resolved more speedily if the province of British Columbia had made an application, as I did, to overturn that decision by means of a

[Mr. Anderson.]

Privy Council decision. As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, we have a narrow highway on the east side of Vancouver Island which runs from Victoria to Kelsey Bay. It is totally inadequate to handle the number of people who travel on it during the summer months. With good planning, good management, good equipment and a reasonable timetable the service would make money, not lose money. It is ludicrous that at a time when more and more people are coming to Vancouver Island for a variety of reasons the company should cut down the service by half.

• (1742)

The public relations of the CPR must have reached an all-time low when they brought forward this latest proposal to discontinue passenger service on Vancouver Island. The people of Vancouver Island have a great distrust of a company which was given an enormous amount of land upon which to build a railroad in the first place. If we take into account the value of that land today we would probably find it would be worth around a billion dollars. Yet we are talking about losing a few hundred thousand by operating a passenger service. The reason the service is not profitable is that the bloody railway has done everything possible to provide worse service in order that they can lose money and then say to the CTC: My goodness, this is awful, we are losing money, please help us, rescue us from our predicament.

I do not think they should be rescued from their predicament. I think they should be made to provide better service with better equipment and make money. I hate to tell the CPR people how to make money, but it is very simple: provide reasonable, low-cost service which meets the demands of the people of the area. Do not start trains running at midnight to reach Victoria at dawn. You don't start your service out of town at midnight, because there is not much you can do at midnight in Victoria. My point is that, given a reasonable schedule, people will use the service, thus avoiding the tie-ups which they face on the highway. They will use the service if fares are reasonable and the cars are clean—they do not want to be put into the baggage compartment.

For these reasons I heartily endorse the bill introduced by the hon. member who spoke before me. I think companies such as the CPR have used poor service to discourage people in order that an application might be made to the CTC on a spurious basis. This has happened not only in Victoria but across Canada. I hope these companies will be brought to task and obliged to provide the service they undertook to provide in return for the land which was given them a long time ago.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I should like to support what has obviously become a violent attack on the structure of the CTC and particularly upon the atrocious Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) who holds office over there. Both the hon. members who have spoken sound like opposition members. It is going to be some election if they vote one way for four years and suddenly get on the opposite side.

The remarks of the previous speaker brings tears to one's eyes because his story reminds everyone of what has happened