

Canadian National Railways

the nature of it, which has resulted in our losing our rail passenger service. Across Canada there has been tremendous expansion in many ways with regard to rail passenger service. There is the Alberta Resources Railway, the Great Slave Lake Railway, the Ontario commuter service, and in a bill which will come before the house there is an item for the expenditure of more than \$50 million in respect of rail lines. This expenditure of Canadian National Railways has been financed jointly by the federal and provincial governments, mainly by the federal government; yet we have to suffer the loss of a vital service on the basis of less than \$1 million.

We do not have a Canadian Pacific Railway to fall back on. We do not have the commuter service that they have in and out of Toronto. We do not have the large, luxurious railiners that the hon. member for Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador mentioned today. We have one lonely, little piece of rail going across 500 miles of bog, barren land, forest and field in Newfoundland. We have one little railway which transports a considerable number of people and is not doing much damage to the Canadian economy. As a matter of fact, it is a great stimulus to our provincial economy. Our rail passenger service has been allowed to go downhill so much in the last year that Oliver Goldsmith would have been reluctant to include it in his *Deserted Village*.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lundrigan: Conditions in some of the way stations and stations generally across Newfoundland would not compare favourably with conditions during the Alaska gold rush, because the rail service in Newfoundland has been allowed to really go downhill. An hon. Liberal member is interrupting me again. Obviously he has not a railway in his constituency. I would like the hon. member and a good many other Liberal members in the house to stand up and speak on this issue, because they will be faced with the same kind of decision making if they are not careful. I believe a number of hon. members of the Liberal party are prepared to speak on this issue, and we hope they are given the opportunity to support us in our endeavour.

Mr. Bell: They have not realized it yet.

Mr. Lundrigan: We have way stations, by-stations and transportation conditions across Newfoundland that are unbelievable. In the last two years things have been allowed to deteriorate and go downhill. It is amazing that people have used the service at all. I

have been writing letters for months on this subject and have received very little response from people with responsible positions in the Canadian National Railways.

The amazing thing is that Canadian National has tried to kill the service; but with regard to every little station across the island one could, if you presented the statistics—which I would if I had time today—prove that the service is being used more than ever. Despite the fact that the service has been allowed to go downhill, people on the island, and tourists, are using the service. Despite the lack of service, it is being used to a greater extent than in the past. Last year for example it was used to a great extent. If one reads the annual report of the C.N.R. he sees that the contention is that the service was used more last year because it was centennial year. But the service has been used to an even greater extent this year, and this is not centennial year. I have never in my life heard an argument presented by a group of individuals representing a company such as that presented by the railway in support of its contention.

It is unfortunate that the Minister of Transport is not with us today. However I beg his colleagues to bring this debate to the attention of the minister. I hope he will make a statement in the house on this question and will check up on what is happening in Canada with regard to rail transportation. A commission on railway costing conducted a study in the province of Manitoba and considered presentations of 3,000 pages. If one were to read in detail excerpts from the report it would be difficult to realize how an agency responsible for providing a basic service could still exist in Canada, with our present code of ethics and attitude toward providing these services.

A member of the Manitoba branch line retention association indicated that, with the present rail costing method used by Canadian National Railways, almost any line could be made a candidate for abandonment. There is no trouble justifying this statement if one is able to go into detail. I beg hon. members opposite and colleagues of the Minister of Transport to implore the minister to take issue with what has been happening in respect of transportation and communications in Canada.

We have great faith in the Minister of Transport. We have little faith in other people connected with transportation. I have heard a number of people referring to Jack