

*Freight Rates Reduction Act*

down honestly with the other three parties in a committee, bring forward all the proposals that have been made and come to some conclusion.

As one who belongs to a party that over the years has felt that much good can come from the nationalization of some of our public services, I might find it wise to ask whether we should not try to sell the Canadian National to the Canadian Pacific. In fact, I wonder whether it might not be cheaper to give the C.N.R. away because with one railway in this country operating without subsidies we would at least be able to find out whether the railway transportation system of this nation was being operated in the interests of the people.

What we really want to provide is a reasonable transportation service that will meet the needs of the people and do so as effectively as possible. It is obvious, because of the needs of the railways, their repeated trips to Ottawa to make representations and the many subsidies we have to provide, that the railways today are not meeting the needs of the nation. I believe that many areas have been well served by our railway system. I believe we have to face the problem in western Canada brought about by the abandonment of lines in a haphazard way which has produced nothing but sorrow for the people who have been dependent on those lines. It is true that we should expect to be able to go to the board of transport commissioners, those holier than thou people who are supposed to represent the Canadian public, and get some assurance that they are going to act on behalf of the Canadian people and will come to reasonable and sensible decisions; but in that regard I come back to the example I used the other day. The management of Canadian National Railways has changed the schedules on the transcontinental line in such a way that they will have no travelling public on that line, and I suppose they have done so in order to bring an application before the board of transport commissioners in the near future for the abandonment of the service. I can tell hon. members and the board of transport commissioners that in two weeks the railway has already succeeded in accomplishing its aim, and they might as well make their application to the board now as wait for another two or three months.

We have a responsibility to the people of Canada, a responsibility not only to provide a freight service but also a passenger service. The one cannot be divorced from the other and consideration of the one has to take account of the advantages of the other. I think it is time that some people realized

this. The Minister of Transport may not be aware of it but there is not a month goes by that Canadian National does not increase its staff at the top level. I can name quite a number of officials in the North Bay division who were never there before. During the war there was not one day when there were not many thousands of cars went through North Bay. At that time there was no stationmaster, no superintendent and nowhere the number of other officials they now have when there is hardly any traffic and nobody for these officials to look after.

It is the responsibility of the people of Canada, my responsibility and that of every member of the house to do something about this situation and see that we get value for our dollars. I suggest that we should stop making these payments to the railway until they become a little more honest with us and not simply make a hodgepodge of a presentation to the committee and suggest that the committee go into rates. It has been said that there is not a man in Canada who can sort out the tariff rates in the freight rate structure. It is a fact that officials have been brought from the United States to help the Canadian National and the Canadian Pacific make their freight rate presentations.

It seems to me that we should decide first what we want our railways to accomplish, and I think the suggestion made by the minister, the member for Port Arthur and the member for Skeena that we develop a national transportation authority to go into the whole problem is long overdue. Rather than bringing this piece of legislation forward the government should set up a committee. I would be quite happy if such a committee sat morning, noon and night working toward the goal of developing a unified transportation service for Canada. We need a transportation authority. We need the railways in this country. We have not progressed to the stage where we can do without our railways.

It is quite true that there is talk now of sending bulk packages through pipe lines. In the *Western Producer* of Thursday, November 22, I noticed that the Alberta research council had announced that they had made their first full scale test of the technique of sending solid objects through a pipe line. This may be one of the things we are going to do tomorrow and it may be something that should be considered by the committee and by an over-all transportation authority. It is quite possible that we will be shipping grain through a pipe line by compressed air in the near future and this may be a good method. Certainly I am not wedded to the idea of railways. I am not completely divorced from the idea that maybe we should never have