

*Provision of Moneys to CNR and Air Canada*

CTC. These two requests are tantamount to a general request to the railways to cease and desist on virtually all the proposals now placed before the CTC. There are a number of such reasons which ought to commend themselves to hon. members as to why this would not be an appropriate step for me to take.

• (5:40 p.m.)

**Mr. Burton:** On a point of clarification, as I understand it the applications for discontinuance of passenger service which have received a great deal of publicity must be dealt with by the CTC, but the discontinuance of trains such as the "Panorama" does not require an application to be made to that body; it can be decided by the railway itself. The same would apply to the discontinuance of the rail liner service between Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert.

**Mr. Jamieson:** My hon. friend is correct in his assessment of the situation. I am assuming that the rail liner to which the hon. gentleman refers is in an area where the railways have a degree of freedom or autonomy with regard to the abandonment of service so long as there is a so-called satisfactory service available. But it does not detract from the basic premise of what I am saying, that there are areas throughout the country where the same situation prevails.

It would not be proper for me to make representation to the CNR that it should not alter any existing levels of passenger service. That would be an inappropriate course for me to take. In the first instance, while it may be that I would have some influence with regard to Canadian National Railways, it must be remembered that many of these services are also provided by the CPR, in which case it would be only a matter of moral suasion, and indeed this is so even in the case of the CNR. It is true to say that by long tradition hon. members are agreed that in fairness to managerial decision, and indeed to the best interests of the railway and the country, the minister should not issue an order.

Therefore, while I shall be more than pleased to pass along the representations of individual members, I believe I would be exceeding my authority and responsibility were I to do more than that and attempt to order the CNR to change its plans.

But I think there is something more basic than that involved in the present exercise. It is something that apparently is not widely

[Mr. Jamieson.]

understood. It is that applications for abandonment are not in themselves an assurance that the lines in question are going to be abandoned. It is purely a matter of seeking now to rationalize the National Transportation Act by putting these applications forward with respect to lines where moneys are being lost. Then the CTC will make the appropriate decision as to whether the public need requires that they be continued and, if that is so, the Canadian government through the appropriate votes will make the necessary subsidies available. So, I repeat that I believe the public interest in these cases, as distinct from the trains to which my hon. friend refers, is taken care of.

In the case where railways have the authority to abandon and they appear to be exercising that authority, may I say that I would be delighted to arrange for members of the House to meet with officials of the CNR to make their representations directly to them, if this appears to hon. members to be a convenient way of doing it; but I would hesitate to go beyond transmitting their representations to the CNR or arranging such a meeting. I understand this is not a wholly satisfactory answer but, as I have said, I doubt very much whether my responsibilities would permit me to go further at this time.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I accept the minister's view that it is not his right to order Canadian National Railways to cease and desist, but I do hope he will go a little further than just passing on what he has heard us say today. He referred to moral suasion as only moral suasion. I think in his case it could be pretty effective, and so I urge him to stay this side of an order but to go beyond being merely a post office. If the minister will arrange for a session when we can meet with officials of the CNR, all of us who represent areas that are affected would be happy to attend and to add to the minister's moral suasion.

**Mr. Burton:** Over the past number of years the railway has made a heavy investment in facilities and services for the potash industry, but some of this has now gone down the drain because some potash companies are transporting their product by highway across the U.S. border to American railway lines. I could spend a considerable time discussing this matter, but since the hour is getting late I wish to ask the minister one question with respect to his announcement this afternoon. The minister stated that the railways have agreed to postpone implementing their