

*Transportation*

It is in that spirit, Mr. Speaker, that I will make some constructive criticism.

I hope that the Transport Commission will have teeth; teeth which will have enough bite to compel those in the railway companies to fill certain gaps, to remedy certain deplorable deficiencies. Once again, I do not wish to present a complete picture of the situation; I will rather proceed by means of illustrations.

Mr. Speaker, despite everything that can be said about the financial plight of the railways, I cannot see why most railway stations in Canada should look shabby and the surroundings neglected beyond belief; the responsible people seem to forget that this is the place which visitors from foreign countries, tourists, for instance, might regard as the face of Canada. Buildings are left in a dilapidated condition with inconceivable thoughtlessness. Some will say that this is because of adverse conditions but it is too important to show a proper face to our visitors to leave things as they are. I am thinking of Expo 1967 which will bring thousands of visitors. Those who travel by train or by car, and who approach railway stations, will find that one station out of five only is in good condition; it is reasonably modern, and painted, and does not look like a hovel or an abandoned house. This fact should be pointed out to those who have the responsibility in this matter.

Mr. Speaker, it is also my opinion that the passenger services are awfully neglected. This has been mentioned many times; I repeat it, because this service is a must; the commission should be specifically instructed to see to it that railways cease to neglect the travelling public, either by abolishing branch lines, which seem to be necessary because of a lack of passengers, or by a lack of deference towards passengers, or in discouraging people to take the train, so as to get rid of them.

It should be determined, Mr. Speaker, whether it is good, logical and morally right for the railways to have obtained their early concessions from Canada including land and natural resources and all sorts of things, in other words millions of dollars in grants and subsidies coming from the taxpayers and then, having invested in different companies all the proceeds from their concessions, isolate passenger service only and say: This is unreasonable; what is economic about our badly-financed organizations?

That is incredible, Mr. Speaker. They did not make those distinctions when they asked the Canadian people to grant them all those concessions; they were ready to provide all sorts of services for Canadians and they did provide them then. Now, however, if other services are more paying than passenger service, part of this profit should be used to continue giving the Canadian people, who paid for it, the services to which they are entitled.

Mr. Speaker, the men, the employees, the railwaymen are also complaining about all sorts of things, particularly that they are not always treated in a humane way. I am not one of those who like to play the demagogue. On the contrary, I am of those who on occasion remind the workers that they not only have rights in society, but duties as well. We did it yesterday, on Labour Day; our workers hear that; they listen attentively and take it into account.

• (7:00 p.m.)

But someone must remind those people of their grievances once in a while. For example, train conductors tell me that they were away from home for two or three days and that they went to eat a good steak at noon—one knows how much a good steak costs; at least \$2.75, \$3, \$3.50; in some areas of the country, where it is less expensive; in certain places, the best steak costs \$4.50 and I suppose they are just as entitled to it as we are. And yet their expense account is cut down to \$1.25 to \$1.50 under false pretences.

How can the morale of those workers be good, when they see the railway company make savings on the cost of their steak at noon, instead of making more effective ones? Their morale certainly cannot be good.

Mr. Speaker, I have personally seen, for example, in Montreal and also in Toronto, under certain circumstances, railway employees who work outside their home towns and who can only visit their families on Saturdays and Sundays, forced to wait sometimes half a day because they cannot travel aboard any train; they can only ride on certain trains. They have to wait at the station, after having been away from their families for a week and they cannot take the train which would bring them back home as soon as possible. As a result, they hardly spend a day with their families, their wives and children.

How do you expect the morale of these people to be high?