

• (8:40 p.m.)

There is no secret about it. I suppose the proper way of putting it is that it is an open secret that the Canadian Pacific has its eyes on additional main line air routes across Canada. It has its eyes on some of the new routes that have been opened up under the recent bilateral agreement, such as the route between Vancouver and San Francisco and the route between Toronto and Los Angeles. But I say to you, Mr. Chairman, if as a result of all these negotiations and importunities on the part of the Canadian Pacific the government lets this company off without providing railway passenger service, and in return rewards it for that policy of neglect by giving it another transcontinental air route, and either the route to San Francisco or the route to Los Angeles, this will be a matter of disgrace as far as the government of this country is concerned. These routes must not be given to the Canadian Pacific. This would be a case of betraying the best interests of our people. I urge very strongly that the government make its position clear on this whole matter with respect to the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Like my colleagues who have spoken, and like my hon. friends in other parties, I should like to take a bit of time to go into the indictment that can be made against the Canadian Pacific Railway for its failure to provide services. But that case has been made. What matters now is what this government is going to do; and I call upon the Minister of Transport in this debate to make a clear statement as to what the position of the government is with respect to the whole Canadian Pacific organization—its railway, its hotel operations, its investments, its mining and other operations and its air services, in respect of which this company is now anxious to make huge profits. I can see the same thing happening again if the Canadian Pacific is given further rights in the air, and if in the course of time some other means of transportation develops, the Canadian Pacific will then try to unload its air services as well.

Transportation is a public service which comes awfully close to being a natural monopoly. This is something that should be run, not for the benefit of making profits for a private organization but for the benefit of the people of Canada as a whole.

I was disturbed last summer when I read a press release concerning the appointment of Mr. Stephen Wheatcroft to make certain investigations for the Minister of Transport. I have asked a couple of times whether the

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Wheatcroft report has been received, and I gather that it has not; but what disturbed me was that part of the press release which set out the terms of reference given to Mr. Wheatcroft. Apparently he was literally asked to ascertain whether it would be possible to have more competition in air services along the main lines across Canada without hurting the position of Air Canada. To me that is like going to a lawyer before you commit a crime and asking him if he can get you off if you do commit it.

The government surely should have its own mind made up as to what is good air policy for this country. The fact of the matter is that it has not shown that it has a policy. Surely it should have its mind made up and should not have to initiate an inquiry such as that being made by Mr. Wheatcroft.

All of these things I suggest add up to there being no policy at all on the part of this government, or to its having a policy simply condoning whatever the Canadian Pacific is doing and handing over to the Canadian Pacific anything that organization wants. This is an organization which, over the years, has exploited the Canadian people. It has made millions out of the services that it has provided, without concern for the people of this country. Not only does it show a disregard for the needs of other people generally, but its attitude toward its employees is one that is a black page in Canadian history.

I said that one of the first issues I raised when I came to this house nearly 24 years ago related to the way in which the Canadian Pacific Railway had treated its employees who were involved in the 1919 strike with respect to their pension rights. I am happy to say that after a few years of raising that issue, time and time again, and after making a direct appeal to the prime minister of that day, Mr. Mackenzie King, I was able to persuade the government in 1948 to accept legislation making it illegal from then on to interfere with pension rights because of the loss of time due to a strike or lockout. But Mr. Chairman, the Canadian Pacific Railway, which found ways in which to exploit its employees in days gone by, is still up to the same sort of trick. Today, for example, we have the Canadian Pacific Railway quarrelling with its employees over every little detail in the Canada Labour (Standard) Code. This is a piece of legislation put through parliament for the benefit of the workers of this country. We went through all its various