

support for expansion and improvement of service. In terms of energy conservation, the expansion and improvement of rail passenger service is not only an integral element in the fight for energy conservation, but it is vital.

At the present time, approximately 85 per cent of our intercity travel is conducted by passenger car. The passenger car provides an average of 140 passenger miles for every gallon of fuel consumed. The airplane provides some 70 passenger miles for every gallon of fuel consumed. The bus provides some 500 passenger miles, on average, for every gallon consumed. But the rail passenger train provides 1,000 passenger miles for every gallon of fuel consumed. So rail passenger service clearly rates very high from the point of view of fuel conservation and moving large numbers of people in intercity travel.

We hear a lot these days about the subsidies which are being paid out to the railways, but at the same time it should be noted that railway users cover the cost of the service very well. About 74 per cent of actual rail costs are covered by the users of the service. In the case of highway travel, 54 per cent of the cost is covered by the users. In the case of aviation, only 31 per cent of the cost is covered by users; and in the case of marine movement, only 19 per cent is covered.

So while there have been protests about the huge amounts of money paid to the railways by way of subsidies, we should bear in mind that the whole question needs to be placed in perspective. If we are providing expensive airport facilities at the cost of taxpayers, while the railways provide their own infrastructure at their own expense, there is obviously a differential involved.

I say, once again, that we welcome this announcement. I might add that we would appreciate it if in future the minister, in his announcements, were a little less political and a little more forthright.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, for those of us who have watched with despair the preoccupation of the minister and his department with air travel, while almost completely ignoring the advantage of passenger-rail service in terms of comfort and pure efficiency, this announcement is a welcome one. It would, obviously, be impossible to provide fast, comfortable rail passenger service without new and modern railway engines and passenger cars.

To the extent that this announcement means we are moving to eliminate past and present inadequacies, we in our party approve. But new equipment will not, in itself, provide the kind of service which is needed and which is now available in Japan and in most of the western European countries. Before we can look forward to service of this kind, a major improvement in track and elimination of the level crossings which still exist in large numbers must take place. Otherwise, the new equipment, capable—as the minister says—of speeds up to 125 miles per hour, will only be able to operate at a fraction of its capability. Also, there is no indication from the minister that he plans to make any major improvements in the track system or to eliminate level crossings.

Rail Service

In the second place, there can be no fast service for passengers if preference continues to be given by the railways to freight trains over passenger trains. Either the set of priorities which is followed at the present time must be turned around to give preference to passenger trains, or we must proceed with a large-scale program of double-tracking. There is no point having a train which can travel at 125 miles an hour if it sits for half an hour or more on a siding while a 150 car freight train is given the right of way.

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Not only are the changes which I have listed required. It is really impossible to provide better service if we decide, as we have, on the recommendation of the minister, to cut the number of transcontinental trains in half. This, we believe, was a mistake. However, the mistake having been made, we hope the government will keep in mind the recommendations of the Canadian Transport Commission, that an extensive promotional and educational campaign explaining the new services will be directed to the public, and that steps will be taken to ensure that we have the equipment to meet the demand which will increase as service improves. Without the ability to meet that demand for rail service, the public will again come to believe, as they have with plenty of justification up to now, that the railway system is not equipped to meet their needs and will be looking for alternate methods of transportation, be it by bus, air or private passenger car—modes which have been increasing in recent years.

So to the extent that this is a step in the right direction, Mr. Speaker, we welcome it. But we see it as only the first step; many more steps are required.

Mr. Jones: Mr. Speaker, I should like to comment on the announcement made by the Minister of Transport. I think we have all been waiting for this announcement for a long time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I want to remind the hon. member that I recognized him, not as leader of a recognized party authorized to comment as other representatives of parties do under our Standing Orders. I recognized him for the purpose of asking a question. He might include in his question a short comment, but it will have to be a question.

Mr. Jones: Mr. Speaker, I was not going to make a speech; I did not think it was necessary to do so. I should like to ask the minister whether he is going to use his good offices to make sure, firstly, that the roadbeds in the maritime region are to be brought up to proper standard to handle trains of this speed; secondly, are some of these trains going to be used in the maritimes; and thirdly, would he use his good offices to see that some of the equipment which is to be manufactured will be manufactured in the maritime provinces and thus provide jobs? There are places in the maritimes where this work can be done.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, so far as the actual location of the jobs is concerned, the contracts are being let with Bombardier-MLW and subcontracting and other arrangements will be in