

Interim Supply

Columbia, one of the richest producing areas in the province where there is up to nearly \$270 million worth production from the mines and forests of the area, and from the fruit growing lands and farming districts. This reduction in service has caused a great deal of resentment throughout the area. I have in my hand the Nelson daily *News* for July 25, 1962, which carries the headline: "Natal brief to detail reasons for passenger service deficit". The reason that the C.P.R. give for discontinuing this passenger service is lack of patronage. Naturally there is a lack of patronage when we are reduced to a Budd car and a split service at Penticton where people coming from Vancouver to Nelson, for instance, have to lie over at night in Penticton and carry on their journey the next day. That causes people to use buses and other forms of transportation. This point is mentioned in the article. The report says:

Natal village commission has gone on record as opposing an application by the Canadian Pacific Railway to the board of transport commissioners to discontinue passenger service between Lethbridge and Spence's Bridge.

The village will notify the railway company and the board of its intention to file a protest brief. Purpose of the brief is to point out some of the obvious reasons for the large deficit suffered in the operations.

In referring to the company's statement that an average of only 15 persons used the service daily between any given points on the line, chairman Orlando Ungaro said he was not at all surprised. He said the travelling public could not be blamed for failing to patronize the kind of service given.

That short comment in the press is similar to the comment I recieved from numerous organizations in my constituency and other constituencies with respect to the present service and the reason for its not being patronized to a much greater extent. I think I can make my remarks as brief as possible by simply quoting from a editorial in the Nelson daily *News*. I am not accustomed to quoting this paper frequently as it is a strong supporter of the present government and extremely critical of the hon. member for Kootenay West a great deal of the time. However, in this instance it represents the opinion of the people in the area. As this is the opinion of their subscribers, of course, they realize that this represents a large body of public opinion with respect to this question. The editorial is entitled "Rail passenger service still a necessity" and it reads as follows:

Once again, the chambers of commerce and municipal and other interested bodies are faced with the task of attempting to save the southern section of the interior of B.C. from losing a public transportation service.

It is the second time within five years that train passenger service to the area has become a matter of concern for these groups. In the interim few have given the railway's passenger service much

more than passing thought except during those periods when travellers have been unable to use the air services or felt road conditions made car or bus travel unpleasant.

I might mention the fact that we are particularly dependent upon rail traffic in the southeastern part of British Columbia in certain periods of the winter. For instance, planes are not allowed to land at Castlegar airport if the clouds are below the mountain tops, and that condition occurs quite frequently during the winter months. Also bus traffic can become very uncertain during heavy snowfall conditions when buses are tied up because of deep snow and snow plowing at certain high elevations. The editorial continues:

Those periods are quite frequent in the winter months and it is for this reason that the public bodies now are willing to fight to retain a passenger service on the rails.

It is time that the general opinion is stated that the rail diesel car operation cannot be termed a good service as it has been operated.

Had the C.P.R. given a better service, which means a faster, cleaner, non-stop service with provision for meals, the situation would now be different. If the railway had promoted the service the situation would now be different. If the granting of the franchise had not carried with it concessions in land and natural resources the situation would have been different.

It would have been different because a better attempt to provide a good service and a normal attempt to promote that service would have left the opponents on thin ice.

It is not usual for chambers of commerce in particular to take the position that they should dispute the right of private business to regulate its own affairs but in this instance, where there has been a granting of concessions, most believe there is an undertaking to provide not only a freight but also a passenger service.

It would be unreasonable to expect the railway company to operate the Kootenay division at a loss in perpetuity. It seems highly likely that freight will in future pay the bills, so that we in the Kootenay must accept the dropping of the passenger service in time, provided a good, reliable alternate service is available.

In the meantime, we in the Kootenay must demand a continued rail passenger service and/or proof that a good service well promoted would not come closer to paying its way.

I might say that, at the same time consideration is being given to the dropping of the passenger service on the Kettle valley railway, consideration is also being given to lessening bus service from the Alberta border to Vancouver. Hence we are faced with this twin possibility of lack of adequate passenger service.

The government of Canada gave the Canadian Pacific Railway millions of acres of land and billions of dollars worth of natural resources in exchange for the building of a railroad that applies to all Canada. It seems that the C.P.R. has now forgotten all about these fabulous grants it received for providing services to the public. The C.P.R. continues