

years ago which conducted an extensive survey in the area for a potential northward line of the CN to open up that part of the country in the northern 500 miles of B.C.

There have been studies upon studies upon examinations of considerations, engineering reports and heaven knows what other kind of examination made of that type of extension, but no activity, no action, no concrete proposals and no attempts whatever to really do something about it. During the time that Jack Pickersgill was minister of transport, I wrote him a letter. This was before he got that cushy job for himself paying him \$40,000 a year or something like that. The money is insignificant to Mr. Pickersgill. He was not concerned about the money. He was just concerned about finding an area for retirement for himself where he would not have to do anything, and he succeeded because it is he who conceived the legislation that created the job to which he got himself appointed after the legislation was passed.

However, I do not want to get involved in that sort of discussion about Mr. Pickersgill. I like him very much. In fact, I wrote letters to him when he was minister of transport in that informal way in which friends can write to each other. I started, "Dear Jack" and I related to him what was and what should be going on in B.C. about this extension, and I asked whether he would do something about it. I got a delightful letter back in which he wrote, "Dear Frank". It acknowledged my letter and told me that this had nothing to do with his department and that I should get in touch with Canadian National: they were the ones who were in the business of building railways, not him.

So I wrote CN and used almost the same phraseology. I said, "Here is the situation, here is the potential, here is the area, here is what is necessary. How about doing it?" The reply I received from CN was that they were not involved in that sort of activity. They suggested that I get hold of the Department of Transport and the minister because this was a matter of government policy. This running around back and forth between the government and CN has resulted in no activity taking place in terms of railroad development in that area where it can really be worth while.

Let us take a contrasting situation to put this matter in perspective. In my own province we have another socially-operated railroad which used to be called Pacific Great Eastern. The Pacific Great Eastern Railway right at the moment, and all credit to them, are building a railroad extension in exactly the same area into which we have been trying to push CN for a number of years. At one stage a premier of my province, who was also president of the PGE railroad, offered to buy the CN north line because he saw what the potential was. I cannot understand the reluctance on the part of the government, because they were not interested in that operation in the first place. I do not know why they did not enter into negotiations to sell the railroad, because now we have the ludicrous situation of PGE building a railroad extension northward from Prince George which for quite a distance parallels the Canadian National line after which it branches off in a northwesterly direction.

The question arises now: What happens to the Canadian National line, and what happens to Prince Rupert as a

CNR and Air Canada

potential port for shipment of goods and materials in and out of that port? Is it going to be over the CN line, or will the Pacific Great Eastern—a provincially-owned and operated railway which is still building the extension where the CN should have built it, because the CN was in that area long before PGE was—manage all the traffic in and out of that area?

If I was running PGE I would want all the traffic possible to move over that railroad as distinct from trying to get it over the CN. I understand that some discussions are taking place, but what they are nobody seems to know at the moment or at least they do not want to say. I think this points out that the CNR really has not concerned itself too much about what it should be providing Canadians. It is a publicly-owned corporation and a publicly-owned railway, and undoubtedly its lack of concern reflects what successive governments have imparted to it.

Mr. Benjamin: They do not believe that.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): No, I guess they do not believe it. They probably do not believe in doing something worth while for Canada either. Consider the port of Prince Rupert. The CNR controls the waterfront in Prince Rupert. I do not know how much property they have along there, but the train runs in and out right along the waterfront and the CN has big blocks of property there under its authority and control. Each time there has been an attempt of any kind at port development in the city of Prince Rupert, in one of the finest harbours on the west coast, it has been blocked by the Canadian National. Each time a proposal has been put forward to do something worth while with that port, the Canadian National, which controls the waterfront, has said, "We are not interested in doing anything—in assisting, in giving up prerogative rights or doing anything at all worth while to develop the port."

• (2130)

The people in charge of Canadian National refuse to budge. Now they are in the process of closing some of the stations in communities that do not even have adequate road transportation and in some cases are on the off-side of the river from the highway and depend desperately on station agents and having a station operative at those points. But it is the intention of the Canadian National to close them, to ignore those communities and disregard the legitimate needs, desires and claims of the people who live in them—all for the purpose of trying to consolidate everything into these servo-centres that Canadian National now has.

With respect to Prince Rupert, I wonder if I could speculate for a moment about the attitude of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang) in his capacity of dealing with the Wheat Board. I do not know how many times it has occurred, Mr. Speaker, but on almost innumerable occasions matters have been raised about the terminal elevators on the west coast and about the shipment of grain, why the ports cannot be operated more efficiently and more effectively, why there have to be blockages, hold-ups and delays, why grain cannot move through these ports and elevators, why we cannot meet our commitments to world trade, why we cannot give guarantees to