

Heritage Railway Stations

particular number but it is not large. Undoubtedly there are heritage railway stations in every province of Canada that should be preserved for all time. This Bill simply sets up the mechanism for doing that. I want to go through it now so Hon. Members will know exactly what the Bill does.

The Bill if passed means that no railway company or any other company shall remove, destroy, sell, assign, transfer or otherwise dispose of a heritage railway station. You will notice, Madam Speaker, that the Bill says "heritage railway station", not any old unused station. Clause 3 reads:

No company shall remove, destroy, sell, assign, transfer or otherwise dispose of a heritage railway station owned by it or otherwise under its control unless otherwise authorized by an order of the Governor in Council.

In other words the Cabinet. It continues:

Any company that acts in contravention of subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine of not less than \$50,000 and not more than \$1 million.

Another clause of the Bill provides that if a company plans to remove, destroy, sell, assign, transfer or otherwise dispose of a heritage railway station owned or controlled by it it must file an application for authorization. Again this is required if it is a heritage railway station. It must file this application with the Minister in accordance with the regulations prescribed by the Governor in Council.

The Minister of course is named by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) as any other Minister is. After having given public notice of its intention, the company files notice with the Minister. Concurrently with the said filing, the company shall submit to the Minister a profit and loss statement of its estimated annual losses for preserving the said station and of any other expenses the company would likely incur in future years as a result of the application being refused. We put that particular protection in the Bill so there will not be a frivolous attempt on the part of an intervener to force the company to go through this procedure when the station is not really a heritage station at all.

Any person who objects to an application for authorization shall, within the stipulated time in the Bill, serve notice on the Minister setting out the reason for the objection and any relevant facts. This way the general public has an opportunity to say why a station should not be destroyed, sold, et cetera. Upon the expiration of the stipulated time in the Bill, the Minister refers the matter to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board for a hearing and report which is set up for this very purpose. Consequently, it is simply making use of a Board already there. The Board then holds a hearing as soon as possible after publishing notice in at least one newspaper in each official language in general circulation in the municipality in which the station is located. This occurs if there is an objection registered by any individual or group across the country. The board must grant all interested persons a reasonable chance to appear before it to make representations. After the representations have been heard, the board must, within 30 days, submit a report, not only to the Minister in charge of the particular Bill but also to the Minister of

Transport (Mr. Bouchard) setting out its findings and recommendations together with the reasons for them.

You will notice, Madam Speaker, that there is a second Minister brought in to make sure that the railway will not be mistreated or put to extra expense and to make sure the station is really a heritage station. This occurs only if the Historic Sites and Monuments Board is of the opinion that the station is a heritage one. That is an excellent point because it brings a second Minister in to review the whole thing. The report will not rest with the one Minister but the Minister of Transport will be brought in as the picture unfolds.

Within 30 days after receipt of the report, the two Ministers shall transmit to Cabinet or the Governor in Council their recommendations along with a copy of the said report, the application for authorization, the estimated annual costs and notice of objection. The two Ministers must reach a decision and take that decision to Cabinet. Again, there is protection to make sure nothing will be frivolous. The two Ministers must make a recommendation to Cabinet. If they say the station is not historic, they can simply give the decision to the railway to dispose of it, burn it down, move it or whatever. The Cabinet may authorize the company to alter the station owned by it. After Cabinet receives the report, if it is unfavourable, Cabinet can authorize the company to do whatever it wants with the station, or the company may be authorized to remove it, destroy it, sell, assign, or otherwise dispose of it. In other words if Cabinet does not accept the recommendation of the Ministers, the railway station can do what it wanted to do in the first place. The authorization required by the company is in addition to and not in substitution for any other authorization or legislation. There will be nothing slipshod about it. It will be thoroughly reviewed.

● (1710)

This is the gist of the Bill which I thought I should outline to Hon. Members of the House. The Bill will actually provide efficient mechanisms which allow concerned citizens to make timely objections to the destruction, removal or sale of stations of historic or cultural value to ensure their conservation in the public interest.

The reason I am interested in this Bill, and why I decided to write such a Bill in the first place, is that of something happened in my home town. There was a station built in the early days of the railway by the CNR in what is now the City of Drumheller, then a coal mining town. When the railway going through that area was abandoned, almost overnight the station was destroyed. The town council was not advised, no one was advised. That historic building that could have been used for many, many years, an excellent building which was well constructed and represented another era, was simply destroyed overnight. Thousands of people felt very badly about this.

On the other hand, some stations have not been destroyed. For instance, in the Town of High River, the CPR in this