

this point of view, Mr. Speaker, only to show that we shall not get equality of opportunity by dickering on television with ten provincial premiers, no matter how long the process continues. It may accomplish other things, but I do not think it will accomplish that.

There are other situations which give rise to despondency if one happens to live outside the magic central circle. Our banking system, for example, originates in this House, as I understand it, but we in the west feel that the branch bank system which has been set up in Canada militates against us, though it is efficient and good in many ways. I would say that it militates against the Maritimes and the Northwest Territories in the same way. All the savings of the people of this country are siphoned into the two central provinces where the head offices of the various banks are located. To be sure, some of the funds are re-invested in the outer provinces but nowhere near the percentage one would hope.

Then there is the whole question of transportation. It is amazing to me that the Transport Commission, a federal agency, should seriously be considering an application by the Canadian Pacific Railway to eliminate or cut down the service provided by its one remaining transcontinental train. From the point of view of executives of the company, secure in their headquarters in Montreal, I suppose this seems a good idea because, they say, passenger train service no longer pays. But if we look at the statistical summary of the affairs of this company provided by the *Financial Post* we find it had total assets, back in 1885, of \$158 million. Two years ago they had increased to almost \$3.35 billion, an apparent increase of more than 2,100 per cent. The real increase is far greater, of course, because there are all sorts of spin-off investments which do not show up to their full value in the balance sheet. And in the same period, shareholders have received dividends amounting to more than \$1,455 million.

Now, I am not one of those who think profits are a sin. I do not believe Canadian Pacific has done a bad job for Canada. By the same token, Canada has not done a bad job for the CPR. As a minor shareholder in the company I can rejoice in a personal way at its success but I cannot help wondering what is going on when they have the nerve to appear before the Transport board in an effort to get rid of their one remaining transcontinental train. Indeed, the Canadian Pacific seems to be trying to get rid of all its trains. Freight trains can be eliminated by educating customers into a realization that almost any other method of shipping goods is speedier and more reliable. Passengers can be eliminated by insisting that they are irrelevant. One way of doing this is to computerize the reservation system and then rig the computers to show that no space is available for sale. If you do it right, it is easy to prove that there are no passengers and thus no requirement for trains. I am not suggesting that this is, in fact, what is being done. I am simply suggesting that there are a number of ways in which the demand for trains can be eliminated.

Once a railway company embarks on such a program, if it keeps up its courage and insists on following it

The Address—Mr. Osler

through, it ends up in an ideal situation. The company retains its real estate without the inconvenience of actually having to run trains. In the case of the Canadian Pacific Railway—and I am not suggesting I am familiar with the long term aims of this company—we now have a very effective corporate entity which insists it can no longer afford to run its one remaining cross-country passenger train. As an alternative to outright abandonment it suggests the federal government should help it run the train three days a week. I do not think this is a very good idea. It sounds very efficient, but both the travelling public and the wellbeing of the work force involved are supposed to be the scale against which we value things in this country. I venture to suggest that neither Canada nor the CPR will go broke if by some mutually acceptable formula The Canadian is kept running on the same basis as it is today.

I mention this matter, Mr. Speaker, because it is a peculiarly western problem. You see, after all, it was 25 million acres of western land which was given to this company in the first place, a generous gesture by the federal government of the day when there were only three or four western members who might have queried the arrangement in Parliament. At that time the federal power still had jurisdiction over the natural resources of the west. In the 'thirties control over those resources was turned back to the western regions. But we got back our natural resources less 25 million acres, whereas the \$25 million cash subsidies which the east advanced were ultimately repaid. It also happens to be provable statistically that more western Canadians use the CPR facilities on a passenger mile basis than do people in other parts of the country. So, the deal which was made with our land is being reneged on and I am appalled to find that a federal agency should be considering such a proposal as is now before it.

There is another feature of this matter which interests me. If we are going to wheel and deal in real estate, why should the CPR, a soulless corporation though perhaps a fine one, be allowed to reconsider the terms of a land deal made some 85 years ago? We ought not to forget that the Indians and the Metis, the original Canadians of this country, also made land deals at about the same time, yet no one has thought of allowing them to renegotiate, even though their deals turned out to be at least as unprofitable to them as have passenger trains to the CPR.

To change the subject, we are all happy to note the dramatic improvement in the wheat situation, thanks especially to Lift and the exigencies of nature in faraway places.

An hon. Member: What has Lift to do with it?

• (4:10 p.m.)

Mr. Osler: You have been talking to different farmers from the ones to whom I talked. Anyhow, my point is that for the first time in years there has been a federal initiative taken to do something more than just tell people to cut their own throats by growing everything