

especially when it was asked for by 20 members of parliament who studied the question in great detail.

We should look into the whole question of passenger service, not just in southwestern Ontario, but in the whole of Canada. It is suggested that in the foreseeable future the price of gasoline may be \$1 a gallon. There is a great problem of pollution in our cities. Surely, this is not the time when railway passenger service should be finished, especially when 100 per cent of the committee members recommended that train service be re-initiated in the area from which I come.

I am sure members will not be shocked to learn that, instead of re-initiating service, the railway stations in this area are being torn down. One could very well ask what we, as members of parliament, are doing here today or any other day discussing the question of CNR financing. We, the representatives of the people, are asking that passenger service be re-initiated. Not only is this government not doing anything about it, but it is permitting the stations to be torn down. These stations were the real foundation of this country. This is why the railways were built in the time of Sir John A. Macdonald. Without the railways to unify this country, there would have been no country.

I am not the least bit happy with what has been going on in so far as CNR transportation policies are concerned. I could deal with many other areas. I hope that someone in the government will read what has been said this afternoon, not only by opposition members but by me. I wish to give a warning to this government. A month or two ago, the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), along with many other people, boarded a train in Toronto and travelled to the city of Owen Sound. At various places along the way, he said that not once during the time he was Prime Minister did he take off any passenger train service in this country. This government had better be listening to what I am saying this afternoon, because the people in that area certainly listened to the right hon. member for Prince Albert.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: One cannot help but respect a gentleman who has given so much service to this great country. Even at his age, he thinks enough of this country, including that area, to travel 125 miles to Owen Sound to look over the situation and say to the people that, in his opinion, there should be train service in that area, particularly when a committee of the House of Commons has unanimously recommended such service. I hope the Minister of Transport will read these words. I say to him that it is high time the government started listening to the voice of the people in this and other areas. If the government does not listen, I say sadly they will be moving to the other side of the House and there will be people sitting on this side who will do these things. The people of my area, in which there are many constituencies, have a desire for the service which has been recommended by the parliamentarians. The government has an obligation to see that they get it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I greatly enjoyed the speeches by the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggan (Mr. Gleave) and the hon. member for

Canadian National Railways and Air Canada

Peel South (Mr. Blenkarn). I particularly enjoyed the fine remarks just directed to the House by the hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher). May I say to him I have heard many of his speeches. It was an outstanding, direct speech of the kind a good representative should make in this chamber.

● (1630)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macquarrie: I was wondering whether the quality of his capacity as a parliamentarian derives in part from the fact that he has spent some time in the opposition. I believe that being in the opposition is good for a member of parliament. Now, I have been here too long. I have been six years on that side and ten here and if I were to stay over here much longer I would be too good, and that upsets the balance! But I believe that to be nurtured and nourished in the opposition makes for the kind of fine representation we have just heard—vigorous representation on a most important matter.

As I join this group of people complimenting the CNR today, I agree with those who point out that this is a fundamental question both in magnitude as it extends across the country and in depth, historically. The hon. member is right. The birth of Canada, the creation of the dominion under Sir John A. Macdonald, was attained only through the practical tie of a railway. One of my political ancestors on the Conservative side—I prefer the progressive side—but one of my ancestors on the Conservative side, old Sir Alan MacNab used to say simply "Railways are my politics" and let it go at that. When I was checking on that piece of data to find out whether it was MacNab or Hincks, I discovered a delightful interpretation of what the letters CNR really mean. In the olden days those letters used to mean two things—"certainly no rush", and "collects no revenue". That was said 90 years ago, 80 years ago, 70 years ago. And I hear people saying it in so many words today.

I share the view of the hon. member for Bruce. When it comes to these railway operations there is a feeling of futility, a feeling of resignation. If I were not a stubborn Presbyterian I would say we could do nothing about it. But we must keep going on. I know exactly how the hon. member feels about the report of the committee. I was on the committee when it went east. It heard all sorts of briefs about the Prince Edward Island causeway and there was not sufficient courtesy shown to that committee as to enable it to get its report presented before the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) stood up and said the commitment to Prince Edward Island was being abrogated and that the inhabitants were not getting a causeway. Talk about not allowing the ink to dry. They did not allow the report even to be typed in either language.

Many things disturb us. I, too, am tired and saddened by the tendency of the CNR itself to adopt an attitude of resignation—to pull up lines and tear down stations. I believe that many in this chamber will live to see new railways being built, because in these days of pressure on the highways and danger to the environment there is still an important role for railways to play and it is a great pity that over the last decade or so we have not seen more imagination, more initiative, more determination on the part of those concerned to make the railways stronger and