

Relocation of Railway Lines

railway line, in effect where the commission says it should. The general thrust of this bill is to provide for a constructive liaison between decisions of a commission and decisions made at a community level.

I raise this point because unless the minister can indicate to the committee that under some other existing authority there is a power of direction to the railway companies that they must co-operate in the development of a new community with regard to the location of lines and so on, this is something that should not be considered. That is, if we are going to prevent mistakes in the future rather than being altogether preoccupied with the mistakes of the past.

Mr. Basford: Mr. Chairman, I go back and say what I said before, namely that it seems inconceivable that you could plan a new community without planning your transportation facilities as part of that plan and without the need to rely on this legislation at all.

Let me cite two examples of new communities. One is in the national capital region, where I have been speaking of the development of a new community which at the moment is called Southeast City. It is being located there because of the attractiveness of the particular site and the fact that it now has a transportation corridor to it. One would plan that new community by providing transportation facilities to it as part of an original new plan for a new community, and without any reference to this particular legislation.

The other is the community of Pickering, being planned in association with the proposed new airport. That is a situation where the government of Ontario, in association with the airport, is planning a new community. We have again said we will co-operate with the provincial government in the provision of public transit and rapid transit facilities to that new community. They will be developed as part of a new transportation plan for that new community. They will be facilities that will not need correcting.

I want to say that in both examples I cited, Southeast City and the new community outside metro Toronto, they would be by definition an urban area deemed to be within an urban area. Southeast City would be deemed to fit within this definition if it were necessary to apply it, although I cannot conceive of needing to make use of it. Both Southeast City and Pickering would be deemed to be within the definition.

Mr. Barnett: I want to thank the minister. I raised this point deliberately under the definition section in order to relate it to further clauses of the bill. I want time to think about the minister's answer before we come to clause 6.

[Translation]

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Chairman, I would like to say a few words on Bill C-27, one of the most important pieces of legislation which, I believe, have been put before us during this session.

This bill binds the government for many years. The first question I am asking myself on this bill before us is to know if there are priorities in the field of transportation other than the relocation of railway lines.

[Mr. Barnett.]

Farm producers of western Canada as well as lumber operators complain, justifiably so, of a lack of railway cars. There are also reasonable complaints that the passenger service between the major cities is really of inferior quality, and I believe that these should be priorities to consider in order to improve transportation services.

The relocation of railway lines may have a sound basis. The environment needs protection, and urban beautification is desired. There is also talk of pollution, but knowing how fast has been the growth of urban centres in recent years, I think that this will continue for quite some time. And, in spite of the answer given by the minister to my hon. colleague for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Barnett), that urban development plans will prevent new construction along the relocated railway lines, I wonder to what extent they will work out.

● (2100)

A few weeks ago, I heard an interview on the radio about the pollution problems in Montreal. We know that in the metropolitan area that problem is rather serious at times and a director of Miron Co. Limited was asked his views, because the company was charged with polluting the air around its plants. The director's answer, in my opinion, was correct. He stated that when Miron Company was set up on its present location, that is a rather long time ago, it was practically open country where there was no residential area and it was precisely why it had been chosen. However, today the city is surrounding the plant. How can the people be prevented from getting close to that pollution centre? We know that such a large cement plant does create pollution problems.

In my opinion, the relocation of railway lines could create a number of problems.

In the past, people used to build their homes near waterways. For instance, they started with the St. Lawrence River. Then, they established their settlements along the main rivers, for these rivers provided the best means of transportation of that era. Later, people built villages along railway lines. Today, we mentioned Calgary, Montreal, Quebec City and some other great cities which have existed for hundreds of years. In those days, development was fairly slow. Today, railway lines can be relocated, but steps will have to be taken to prevent people from crowding around the new railway lines which will be rerouted out of the great cities.

If land is to be recovered in downtown areas, much will be lost in the areas surrounding the cities. When the hon. member for Scarborough (Mr. Harney) spoke a while ago—I do not know whether he had Montreal in mind—but he spoke of railway transport as an inexpensive mode of transport at a time of energy crisis.

In Montreal, for instance, we have commuter trains which offer the workers an inexpensive and convenient mode of transport. In Montreal East, railway lines will have to be replaced by another means of transport. Of course we have the subway and buses, but because of the large number of cars and trucks on our highways and streets, buses are not the answer to the massive movement of workers from the outskirts to the city or vice versa.