

Supply—Transport

the largest percentage of business done by these companies is carried out with buyers outside the province of Ontario, so it is vitally necessary that they should have means of transportation for their goods.

All this, of course, relates to the truckers strike in the province of Ontario. I have placed this in its proper order of precedence by requesting the Minister of Labour to intervene to bring negotiations to a successful conclusion, such negotiations having broken down. I now bring this matter to the attention of his colleague the Minister of Transport, since responsibility for both these means of transport, as far as Parliament is concerned, belongs to him. I now ask the Minister of Transport to intervene and to use his good offices, along with the Minister of Labour, to see what may be done at the earliest possible date to bring this strike to a conclusion, or to find some means of alleviating a situation which adversely affects the people who live in communities over a broad area from Owen Sound to southern Bruce and southern Grey, down as far as the cities of Kitchener, Stratford and many other points too numerous to mention at this time.

Their livelihood is as important as the livelihood of the men who are engaged in the trucking industry. I think this matter is of such importance that both the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Labour should get together in an effort to bring about a settlement which would be to the satisfaction of everyone and to the advantage of the economy of this large area of Ontario.

Mr. Chairman, there are a few moments left—probably too few for anyone else to intervene. I should like, therefore to refer to the abandonment of railway passenger service on the C.N.R. line between Toronto and Owen Sound, particularly between Palmerston and Owen Sound. The figures in this regard have been placed before the Board of Transport Commissioners. An application to withdraw the service has already been made.

I should like to suggest to the Minister that some of the profit made on this divisional line is made, as is well known, not from the passenger service but from the other services provided to this area by the C.N.R. Over the years in this area, as in others, the railway has carried on a unified service. With the advent of dieselization the situation changed. Express was taken away and carried by trucking services. In addition, the passenger

service was whittled away from the unified trains. Now we are faced with the application to which I refer.

Of course the railway authorities present figures indicating that they are operating at a loss. But there are other lines operating in this area and comparisons can be drawn. I suggest there is a greater area of profit in other spheres of the operation. Officials of the C.N.R. have used the argument that the service east of the line of which I am speaking is still being maintained. I should like to put it on record that the operations on this line have been reduced until they represent less than 50 per cent of what they were at one time. It is wrong to use this as an excuse for abandoning service on the other line.

I think it is the intention of the railway company to seek to abandon this other service in the future. I am therefore asking the minister to use his good offices to see that this particular service is maintained.

Some hon. Members: Five o'clock.

Mr. Pickersgill: Perhaps the Minister of Labour could also say a word.

Mr. Nicholson: I would not want the committee to leave here today with the impression that negotiations in this unfortunate labour dispute, which exists in Ontario, and which affects other parts of Canada and in addition our neighbour to the south, have broken down. On at least three occasions within the last two weeks I have referred to the fact that negotiations are continuing and that a senior official of my department and senior officials of the provincial department of labour are in close contact with both labour and management.

My latest report is that a further meeting will be held, if not over the week end then on Monday next. The unfortunate incidents referred to in the news today disturb us all, but I am pleased to say that negotiations are still continuing and I do not think this is the time for me to intervene, as long as there is any chance of the parties coming together and agreeing on a solution between themselves.

● (5:00 p.m.)

Mr. Winkler: But the minister will reiterate that the officials of his department are working toward a settlement at this time?

Mr. Nicholson: That is correct.
Progress reported.