

Bus Line Seeks Municipal Subsidy

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Sun Staff Reporter

COQUITLAM — The operator of Columbia Stage Lines, which links New Westminster and Port Moody via Coquitlam, said Thursday he will need a municipal subsidy to keep the buses running.

Gerald Northcott, manager of the line, told The Sun he would present a statement showing the line's losses to Coquitlam council representatives next Wednesday.

He did not say how big a subsidy was sought but said the firm is seeking an annual profit of seven per cent.

He opposed as uneconomic any increase in the 30-cent fare for the full trip between New Westminster and Port Moody and intermediate fares of lesser amounts. The eight-mile route serves a large area of Coquitlam.

Northcott said the charter bus service he operates shows a profit but this is lost by maintaining the daily bus service.

He said suggestions for a fare increase would not solve the problem.

If the Columbia Stage Lines ceases operation Northcott said,

it would leave Port Moody without bus connection to either New Westminster or Vancouver.

"We have been swamped with calls asking what could be done to get a subsidy and how the buses could be kept going," Northcott said.

Mayor Al Howe of Port Moody said 300 senior citizens in his city had signed a petition urging continuation of bus services.

"Port Moody otherwise will be completely cut off from anywhere and the only way a person could travel would be by private car or taxi," Howe said.