

dependence on the automobile. This dependence on the automobile has changed our way of life and has made us look away from other modes of transportation.

If this country a long time ago had begun thinking of the importance of railways, there would not have been abandonment of rail services but, rather, their augmentation. They would have served the area in which we live. Furthermore, we would not be considering today the kind of highway which will run through, and perhaps ruin, some good residential areas merely because we want to move cars and trucks. We might be looking at a system which augments an existing rail system running north and south which, incidentally, does not exist today.

We ought not to look on railways as a means of connecting sparsely populated areas separated by great distances in Canada. Rather, we ought to consider railways as means of transporting great numbers of people over short distances. Thus, the railways would fulfil a new purpose. I think that shows the dilemma we face in Canada. We have tended to look on transportation on a piecemeal basis, tending to consider in isolation trains, trucks and other modes. Perhaps the time has come to do what has not yet been done in this country by any government, that is, develop a national transportation policy in which the railroads would play an ever increasing role as time goes on. That ought to be the conscious aim of such policy.

In my area we hope to develop the tourist industry and secondary industry. These industries will depend upon the railways. If we are to depend only upon existing rail services, these industries will not develop and my part of Ontario, as well as other parts of Canada, will be the worse for it. That would be the result, generally, if there were a failure to adopt a national transportation policy.

● (2140)

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention to prolong this discussion. Indeed, the members of the official opposition would like to see this matter referred to committee so we can deal with the many unresolved problems that have been brought to the attention of the minister and the government during the course of this debate. However, there is one urgent problem I have been wrestling with during the past two weeks and I would like to place it on the record this evening.

I have been in correspondence with the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand). I have also had conversations with the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Richardson), who is the minister from the province of Manitoba. I believe the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Guay) is in the House this evening.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): I am listening to you.

Mr. Dinsdale: That is good. I hope that hon. member will become part of the Manitoba group which on a non-partisan basis is trying to bring forcibly to the attention of the government an area of very sad neglect in the field of air transportation. Briefly, the story of air transportation as it affects the keystone province has been one of gradual deterioration over the past ten years. It was always expected that the city of Winnipeg would be one of our major international air centres. It is designated as an international air centre. Unfortunately, because of govern-

Canadian National Railways and Air Canada

ment policy its role in that regard has been gradually downgraded.

When minister of transport, that able political gentleman the Hon. Jack Pickersgill used to talk about the role of Winnipeg in the international air scheme of things. When he was later transplanted and became the first chairman of the Canadian Transport Commission he used to make speeches across the country. I have in my hand a newspaper report of a speech he made in the city of Winnipeg on September 9, 1969. The headline reads "Air gateway status hinted for Winnipeg". The hon. gentleman was still hinting as late as 1969. I quote from the article:

The possibility of Winnipeg becoming an international air gateway was hinted Wednesday by Jack W. Pickersgill, president of the Canadian Transport Commission.

Speaking to the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, the former minister of transport said talks between the federal government and Canada's two main air carriers had already taken place and that a proposal might be placed before the International Air Transport Association in the near future.

It is all "hinting, "maybe" and might". I think the time is long past when we should say that it "might" or "could" be possible, and the government should move to do something concrete in this regard. I am sure the hon. member for St. Boniface is heartily in agreement with what I am saying. Winnipeg's position on the polar route places it in the most strategic position possible. That route is 400 miles shorter to Europe. I cannot understand why this government persists in spending a billion dollars to establish a satellite airport for the city of Toronto at Pickering, which is opposed by the residents of Pickering, when they have the logical location at the Manitoba international airport which has been waiting to be utilized to the maximum since 1969.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dinsdale: In 1969, the then president of the Canadian Transport Commission hinted that the great breakthrough was about to be achieved. Let us all work together for that end so that the growing problems of air transportation which have been outlined will be resolved. At present you cannot get reservations out of the city of Winnipeg because of the growing number of people using the airlines. The facility has to be expanded.

There is another aspect of this problem to which I shall refer briefly. That is the role of regional air carriers. The same gentleman, the Hon. Jack Pickersgill, when minister of transport announced a regional air policy. When it was announced, it was hailed by the then president of TransAir, the regional carrier for the central part of Canada, in these words:

The new policy is the greatest announcement made in Canadian aviation history since the time Trans-Canada Airlines was formed by act of parliament in 1937—

That was recorded in the Manitoba *Business Journal* of October-November, 1966. Unfortunately, the dawn of a new age has not yet appeared. The record since that time with regard to regional air policy has been one of gradual deterioration. When Air Canada was responsible for supplying air service to western Manitoba and eastern Saskatchewan we had a regional air service that extended right through to Calgary. During the intervening period the responsibility was transferred from Air Canada to