

*Atlantic Development Board Act*

route followed by the rail line from Montreal to Halifax was satisfactory during the days when it was first built. It was necessary to assure confederation. It was natural that the original construction of the railway line should follow the shores thus linking the centres of population. Today, as I see it, we need fast, direct connections between the maritimes and the industrial heartland of central Canada. It will be a costly thing. It will be a grand design. It cannot be done immediately.

I have pressed for a national transportation policy and in that policy I envisage thought being given to bringing new transportation facilities to the maritime provinces. The present line running from Montreal through Richmond, Levis and Mont Joli covers 840 miles. The fastest time in which this route can be travelled today is some 21 hours. Is the time not here when we should give consideration to bringing about a direct line from Richmond, Quebec, through the top corner of Maine to Woodstock, New Brunswick, and utilizing the present main lines that are available? To follow this suggestion would cut by one-third the distance of the present route. The time that would be taken for travel from Montreal to Halifax would be less than 12 hours rather than the 21 hours now required.

There would be tremendous savings in freight costs both ways. There would be made available to the maritimes the probability not only of the expansion of existing industries but the establishment of additional ones, which would be beneficial not only to those provinces but to Canada as a whole. Such a direct line would not take the place of the present line in any way but would be used chiefly for high speed freight transportation.

The maritimes have tremendous potentialities for the production of electrical power. What they need now, as I see it, is thinking devoted not only to those matters that the Atlantic Development Board is dealing with. We in other parts of Canada, and in particular the Department of Transport—I know the minister has given thought to a national transportation policy—should be thinking about assuring direct, efficient and high speed rail communication for the maritimes. It will be costly but over a period of 60 years the amortized cost would assure the dividend of a discharge of the indebtedness.

This would enable those provinces by the sea to become a vital part of Canada's industrial and business might. Over a period of

years there would be tremendous savings in the subsidies that would otherwise have to be paid. It cannot be done in a day, but I think the Department of Transport might very well devote itself to a full and complete study of this subject.

On a later occasion I shall give my views on a transportation system for the western provinces and in particular the Rocky Mountain area leading to the Pacific ports. This country, with all its vast potentialities, must catch something of the greatness of the possibilities of the future. We have to think in a big way. When one reads the story of confederation and the Year Book—I am speaking now from memory—after confederation the prediction was that by 1940 the population of Canada would be some 40 million. How far out that was. New dreams can be implemented and carried out by planning. We have to populate this nation. We have to develop. We have to remove the restrictions of those who fear increased immigration. Canada cannot continue for the next 50 years in the lackadaisical way in national development which has too often characterized this nation in the past.

The task is a difficult one. The arguments that will be advanced will be complex. But I feel that we as representatives of this nation as a whole would give young Canada new hope in 1967 were we to raise the horizons of our ideas for national development so that in every part of this nation Canadians, regardless of their geographical address, would be able to have each for himself that degree of equality of opportunity which was the basis of confederation and in my opinion will be the strongest bond of confederation in the next 100 years.

● (4:20 p.m.)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret):** May I remind the hon. members that if the minister speaks now he will close the debate.

**Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton South):** It is not my intention to hold up the proceedings, Mr. Speaker, but I would ask the Minister of Transport, in replying to the remarks which have been made by hon. members, to take into consideration the fact that the Donald report on coal is, I understand, under study by the cabinet committee. We have been given to understand that the portions of the Donald report which have been published, and this has not yet been denied, indicate a very detrimental situation. Whether or not this is so I cannot say but I ask the minister to reveal that portion of the