

*Economic Conditions*

● (1850)

The only way to reduce core inflation is by reducing the deficit. I commend to the government and its supporters a new book which will shortly be in their hands entitled "A Way Out". Its authors will command, by their names and performance within government ranks in the past, their attention and concern.

With respect to transport facilities, we have to bring capital indebtedness into line. We should be considering, as we have done to some degree in the past, writing off all the old historical debt and bringing new capital assets closer into line, and on that basis eradicate the historic debt and determine what are the fair charges.

We should encourage competition within both the private sector and the public sector, as well as competition between the two sectors. When we do that, we can determine the degree to which we own and control our own destiny and our own country. Revenue raising in isolation has never worked. It will not work here in Canada.

With respect to the Arctic and what is proposed, as I indicated, the direction is to vest in the territorial government all control over operation, maintenance, upgrading and replacement of the air facilities. That poses a question. How do you vest in the right of Canada something that is already in the right of Canada? If the direction is to turn over all of these facilities to the territorial governments, how do you do it?

If time permitted, I would read the question put to the legal counsel because the response to it is rather intriguing. The powers of the commissioner in council in the Northwest Territories and in the Yukon are under the Yukon Act and the Northwest Territories Act. As we all know, they are subject to the laws of the Parliament of Canada. Consequently, it does not seem possible for the commissioner in council to construct and maintain airports since his powers and duty are now and have always been vested in and assigned to the Minister of Transport.

There is no means we know of to do that sort of legislation in this House. The government does not want to do that. I am talking about the subterfuge and the way you go at these things.

The legal advice of the Crown to those who have to sort out how to get out from under this situation is for the governor in council, upon submission to the Treasury Board and the governor in council by Transport Canada and Indian Affairs and Northern Development, possibly under the Public Works Act, to transfer the existing B & C airports and the duty and maintenance attached thereto to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

This is where it gets very interesting. Then the minister could possibly, under the Yukon Act and the Northwest Territories Act, direct both commissioners to operate and maintain these airports and, second, under the Territorial Lands Act with the approval of the governor in council, transport these airports to the Territories.

Who is going to pay for them? How would the people of the Arctic pay for them? At one point it was acknowledged quite openly that the first, direct and recognizable result of such a policy would be the downgrading of the level of service to people living in the Yukon and in the Northwest Territories.

It was recognized that option two as well as option three would provide a lower standard of service than has been provided under the existing policy. Fuel facilities should be provided only where necessary to regulate operations. There is nothing about expansion, nothing about new runway requirements. The change is there, to be determined not by airport classification, but by critical requirement. In other words, are we handling 185 Cessnas or 737 Boeing jet aircraft? There is quite a difference.

These questions need a much closer review than can be brought to bear today in the limited time available. After the New Year when this session resumes, it will be the intention of several of us on this side to pursue the matter with respect to aircraft facilities because of the cost burden and stresses placed upon the territorial council and the Yukon. The point is whether the government, floundering around as it is, is justified in the action it has taken in many areas. They are the ones who have been here most of this century.

We must determine whether this subterfuge has been transferred to other sectors of our economy and other sectors of government. It is demonstrated in these documents, indeed, it is argued, that decisions such as this should not come before government, but rather should be handled internally at the ADM level. There is no need to bother the economic development committee because it is too busy. Wherever possible these should be made before getting remotely close to the responsible authority, which is government. I object to behind-the-scenes deals being cooked up which ultimately will cost the competitive market and cost dearly the people in the Arctic who have to use air service to maintain their livelihood and freedom to move around.

What every member on this side has talked about in the past two days has been relevant. What will make that relevancy credible can only come from direct action by government in areas of high interest and the impact it is having on our economy and on the free marketplace. It will only come when government moves and acts credibly in response to the suggestions. Dozens of good suggestions have come from this side of the House in areas of housing, underemployment, unemployment and community work. Above all, attention should be given to the fact that this government is only feeding and perpetuating the problem.

It is to be hoped that the time has not been lost and that the government has in fact paid attention. It has been demoralizing to sit here on this side of the House throughout the day and take note of the almost total absence of ministers, the number being down to one more frequently than not. There has very rarely been anybody on the treasury benches. In fact, at this time there are only two occupants.