

rable though it may be, that the policy has been administered by a Liberal government since it was introduced. For the past five or six years it has been administered by this government. Finally, they must remember that this minister has been minister of the department for about a year and a half. While it is refreshing and encouraging to find the minister admit the failure of the national transportation policy—encouraging because it at least indicates that a really serious look is being taken at that policy in view of the minister's admission—I just want to say that it is impossible for me and the people of Canada to wash the Liberal government since 1967 clear of any responsibility, (a) for the policy which was a disaster and, (b) for the disastrous implementation of that policy since 1967.

I put this motion on the order paper because the minister informed the House and the country that the full policy is now being discussed within his department. That makes me uneasy. As far as I know, he is surrounded by a good many of the same people who were responsible for the policy introduced in 1966-67. I only hope they have seen the same light the minister has seen, have the same illumination he has evidenced and the same conversion that he has talked about. I hope the discussion inside his department will not be the kind of frustrating effort that I am worried about because, I repeat, many of the same people will be doing it.

Because of that it seemed necessary that this House of Commons discuss this very important subject at the earliest opportunity. Not that we will be able to solve it. My colleagues and I do not claim to have the in-depth knowledge that is necessary to solve every part of this very vexing and complex problem. However, it will give us an opportunity to discuss the general principles which ought to underline a national transportation policy.

I did not have the pleasure of hearing the minister's speech on March 7. However, as I read it, the Minister of Transport suggested there had been no objection to the principle of the bill which forms the basis for the present national transportation policy. I looked up *Hansard* because I had vague memories about objections voiced by my then leader, the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas), and by myself as a matter of fact. I should like to read from the statement made by the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands on September 2, 1966, as recorded at page 8044 of *Hansard* just so that the minister knows there were some people in this House who were very strongly opposed to the basic principles that underlay the bill they were putting through and which is now the law of Canada. The hon. member said:

● (1520)

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that I do not believe that free enterprise and the competitive system of transportation can give Canada an adequate transportation policy at a price we can afford. There may be countries where they can afford to have all sorts of free enterprise and competition; different forms of transportation and different companies competing with each other, duplicating services. However, in a country of 20 million people where, as I said before, we are more dependent than probably any country in the world on getting our goods to market over long distances at competitive prices, where we spend more per capita on transportation than probably any other country in the world, I do not think we can afford the luxury of having a free enterprise, competitive transportation policy.

#### *National Transportation Policy*

Those are the words of my colleague, the leader of this party on that day. Toward the end of his speech at page 8046 he said these words which seem to me to be relevant:

I am convinced that this government or the government that succeeds it will find that in a few years this transport commission, because of its lack of power and authority, will not be able to solve the problem. If the house does not at this time give that commission some power and put some teeth into the bill, then some subsequent parliament will be compelled to do so, after we have lost valuable years and very large sums of money.

Mr. Speaker, if ever I heard a prophetic statement, in view of the minister's admission of failure, that certainly was one. On January 27, 1967 I participated in the debate on third reading of the bill and said things along similar lines. It was the New Democratic Party which at that time, when the bill was first introduced in Parliament and thrust on the people of Canada, said that a transportation policy based on competition, profit and on the principles of free enterprise would fail. Both my colleague and I emphasized in the speeches, to which I referred that the result of that policy would be great hardships on the prairies, on northern Ontario, on northern Quebec, on the northern part of Canada and on the Atlantic provinces and that it would interfere with the development of secondary industry in all these underdeveloped parts of Canada. We saw that not because we were more intelligent or brighter than other people but because we were not prisoners of the free enterprise fetish that controls the Liberal and Conservative Parties. Because of that we were able to see the consequences of the kind of policy that the Hon. Mr. Pickersgill introduced in this House and pushed through this House. Later, when the policy became law, he was able to leave us and take up the chairmanship of the commission. Ever since Mr. Pickersgill became Chairman of the Canadian Transport Commission Canada has suffered without end in the transportation field.

In the time available I want to indicate some general lines which ought to guide us in the development of a transportation policy. I do not expect, although I hope, all my suggestions on behalf of my party will be accepted by all members of this House, but in my view they are basic to any really relevant and effective national transportation policy.

First, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to members of the House and to the minister that we must pass laws, take action and have policies that will make transportation a public utility. A transportation policy for Canada must not be controlled by the principles of profit and by the alleged principles of competition in this society. That does not mean that the transportation system has to lose money. There is no reason for that. The transportation systems have always made money. It does mean, however, that the transportation system in Canada must serve the needs, both national and regional, of the people of this country, sometimes without regard to profit and never governed by the profit motive so far as service is concerned.

I shall have something to say about the Canadian Pacific a little later, but let me deal very briefly with a number of the problems with which the minister is now faced. There is a constant fight against the Crowsnest Pass rates, particularly by the CPR. As I informed the House in my speech of January 27, 1967 I had occasion over a number of years to act on behalf of some railway unions on a number