

Supply—Transport

the Canadian Pacific railway was built if they had applied the test contained in the second sentence on page 131 which reads:

... no railway ventures will be undertaken excepting after thorough investigation of each project and always with due regard to the financial commitments involved.

To that I must add:

... and unless it is needed by the settlers already established in productive areas.

On the one hand we do not want to indulge in foolish and harum-scarum development but on the other hand I imagine the minister will agree with me that if that test had been applied to the C.P.R. it never would have been built. It is the C.P.R. actually to which this country in its early decades of expansion after confederation owed such a lot. It did not wait to serve already existing settlements. It went ahead of settlements in many cases and enabled the country to be developed.

I am not going to dwell on that point. I am only raising it because there seems to be a statement here that something is generally assumed. I personally would not assume it at all. For instance, at the present time I suppose the most important railway development now under way is that going into the new iron mines of Labrador. If I am correct that is an entirely private enterprise. Would the minister say whether that is so?

Mr. Chevrier: Yes, it is.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I would hope that there may be many others, and I would think that other people in this house who share my view as to the best way to expand the country's facilities would agree with me on that. Therefore, without wishing to make heavy weather about this or to stress it unduly, it seems to me that we might at some early time ask for a statement from the government as to whether a thing of that kind, which is stated as an almost self-evident fact, does or does not carry the approval of the government. I come back to what I said at the outset. Is there not some sensible way in which we can have this report considered by the house? I confess quite frankly that I have not read it. There seem to be a lot of things in it, and I happen to know there are other people who are not in the house tonight who would like to have a chance to discuss this very important report. I suggest to the minister that he might consider whether adequate time ought not to be provided to consider it. The minister has pointed out, and I think quite correctly, that we are now on the transport estimates and this is the natural time to discuss it, as we are in fact discussing

it. However, we are doing it in a rather thin house and, as I say, rather by surprise and in the absence of a good many people, or several people at any rate, who would like to have their say. I would hope that the minister might consider that it would be a matter of importance that this report, which I suppose is the most important of its kind that we have ever had, might have adequate time for consideration.

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Chairman, I hope that in anything I have said I have not conveyed a wrong impression. The hon. member for Cumberland and the hon. member for Greenwood as well seem to be of the opinion that there will not be an opportunity to discuss the report, and that the house has been taken by surprise. I think it was in answer to a question by someone in the C.C.F. group that the Prime Minister announced that the report could be discussed when the estimates of the Department of Transport were up for consideration. I presume that this is not the only time that these estimates will be before the house, and I am sure that if anyone has been taken by surprise tonight he will not be tomorrow night, next week, or when these estimates are before the committee again. As the house knows, these estimates do not go through overnight. It has not been my experience at least that the house was so extraordinarily courteous to me that they put them through in a day, so I imagine we will have some discussion. My hon. friend, and the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra, referred to a statement made by the commission on page 131. Surely these two hon. members are not serious when they want me to get up and comment on it. You could pick out hundreds of statements made throughout the report and ask the same question: is the government of this view; is the government of that view?

The answer to these questions is that when the government decides to implement the recommendations of the commission, as I indicated a while ago, it will bring legislation forward for the consideration of parliament. In so far as this particular matter is concerned, I think we have had before the house at the last and previous sessions acts of parliament dealing with certain railway ventures. We had a private bill to construct a railway in Labrador. We had one concerning the Temiscouata.

Mr. Green: That was not new.

Mr. Chevrier: We had one concerning the P.G.E. We have had several of them. In accordance with custom the government deals with each project seriatim, and I do not think