

al needs of the Fort St. James, Vanderhoof and Burns Lake area and said that the three communities of the region should be served by an air carrier who would connect the people of the region with Vancouver and other areas. They requested assistance under the municipal grants program, on the basis that one air field would serve three communities, because, although each community faced different problems, the over-all situation was the same.

That application—that is what it was—was rejected. I discovered, after phoning the regional air people in Vancouver today, that it was rejected because the department could not conceive of a grant for one airstrip to serve three communities. The wider concept of an airstrip to serve communities which want to co-operate was beyond the grasp of the department. They said, “No, sir, this is an abortive attempt, and out it goes. We are not going to accept it”. The three municipalities which wanted to do something together for the region found themselves back, as the saying goes, on square one. They had to start all over again.

The area of which I am speaking encompasses in the neighbourhood of 25,000 square miles of British Columbia. The three municipalities concerned had wanted to put their heads together. They came up with the figure of \$625,000 for building one airport. They felt that if the suggestion had been heeded, the opportunity for communicating directly with other communities, particularly Vancouver, would have been enhanced. It would have been easier to move goods and people in and out, particularly to Vancouver.

Let me take a few more moments, if they are available, to me, Mr. Speaker, to convince hon. members, many of whom I am sure do not need convincing, why it will be desirable to send this bill to committee, where it can be examined at greater leisure than is possible at this time. Fort St. James was simply interested in seeing that the economic needs of the people who live in and around the area year in and year out are met. For example, the request made in connection with the airport simply involved the removal of stumps, not from the runway but from the proposed extension; the grading of the proposed extension; the putting of gravel on the 5,000 foot by 150 foot wide runway; the installation of non-directional beacons, as well as weather and radio facilities. In addition the request was made for the completion of terminal facilities and for hard surfacing the 5,000 foot by 150 foot runway.

● (1720)

I wish to deal with the completion of terminal facilities for the benefit of those people who have only had the experience when travelling by aircraft of walking through air conditioned or heated terminals and companionways into a DC-8 or something of that nature. They will not fully appreciate the prospect of standing in zero weather with the wind blowing and no radio facilities to help you determine if and when the plane will arrive. I found from experience that standing in cold weather has quite an effect on the functioning of the kidneys. Many places in northern British Columbia do not have full terminal facilities and it is necessary to cope with this problem. All these communities are asking for are the normal, everyday

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facilities that are available everywhere except in small airports operated in conjunction with municipalities.

Vanderhoof is a distinct case in point. That municipality has been maintaining a military establishment for the past 28 years. The airport was developed during World War II. I do not know whether it was the Department of National Defence or the Department of Transport which prevailed upon the village of Vanderhoof to take over that airport. The runway is 5,600 feet. It needs hard surfacing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger):** Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired. He can continue only with the unanimous consent of the House.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Howard:** I wish to thank hon. members. My timing was not as accurate as it should have been. I have mentioned the needs of Vanderhoof. Burns Lake has similar needs, but of a slightly different nature. You can put them all together and the package is the same. These communities are disadvantaged by the department's policy of making grants to municipalities. I hope my bill will be used as a mechanism to expand that concept and enlarge the vision of the department and this government regarding rural areas.

**Mr. S. Victor Railton (Welland):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to compliment the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) on trying to introduce legislation to upgrade and enhance the aviation facilities of Canada, particularly in his own area in British Columbia. I must say he shows a great deal of knowledge of the air transport needs of that province and a great deal of knowledge about the needs of remote communities which would be fulfilled by the adoption of this very idea.

Although I said he is to be congratulated, I do not think this House should be worried about his good intentions. In my opinion, the bill is somewhat redundant. I believe we have adequate legislation and planning mechanisms to cover the concerns expressed in Bill C-102. There does not seem to be any need to unduly delay the urgent business of this House with this type of legislation.

The National Community Airports Assistance Program introduced by the government in 1971 is already paying handsome dividends. The budget for this program has been increased 100 per cent from a budget of \$1 million to \$2 million annually. The numerous airports which have received assistance through this dispensation have reaped dividends in many respects. For some communities, upgraded air facilities have acted as a boon to business and the tourist industry. For others, a new or resurfaced runway has encouraged settlement of a remote area and promoted social and economic exchanges with other settlements. In this fashion Canada overcomes the vastness of its geography and its peculiar demographic characteristics by uniting our remote or sparsely populated regions with our growing urban areas.

The criteria for assistance have been determined on two levels. Under the assistance policy program, airports are grouped into two categories, national and community. This distinction properly reflects the responsibility for