

*Transportation*

few comments on Bill No. C-231 which is intitled:

An Act to define and implement a national transportation policy for Canada, to amend the Railway Act and other Acts in consequence thereof and to enact other consequential provisions.

By this bill the federal government seeks to set up a Canadian transport commission and to provide for all modes of transport which come under federal jurisdiction such as railways, trucks engaged in extra-provincial activities, aircraft, coastal and inland vessels and pipe-lines.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a terrific expansion of transportation in the past ten years or so. As far as shipping is concerned, the St. Lawrence seaway has enabled Canada to make great progress in the fields of transport and trade by waterways.

Air transport has been characterized by the same dynamism in the last six years since another carrier, Canadian Pacific Airlines, is now in operation besides Air Canada. Other routes have been inaugurated which make Canada justly proud of the air services it provides for its citizens and foreigners.

In addition, over the past ten years there has been obvious and noticeable progress in transportation, especially in motor vehicle transport. That advance, that progress is due to the Trans-Canada highway which now links Canada from coast-to-coast and which allows for the efficient and speedy transport of passengers and freight by road.

• (5:00 p.m.)

Ten years ago highway transportation between or within the provinces was faced with many problems.

Finally, we note that during that decade, the railways, which were up against a keener competition from increased water air and highway transportation, have nevertheless continued to develop thanks to the many subsidies granted by the federal government, and the yearly subsidies they have received, especially since 1960. This brief review shows that water, air and highway transportation have made inroads upon the monopoly of transport held almost exclusively by the Canadian railways a dozen years ago.

Of course, this bill is very important and it was actually time it was introduced in this house, since a royal commission had made very worthwhile recommendations and suggestions many years ago. I am speaking of the MacPherson commission.

Of course, some reforms are called for and co-ordination and standardization regulations should be encouraged with regard to those four means of transportation, not to mention the field of pipeline transportation.

But, Mr. Speaker, if some reforms and standardization are advisable, this does not mean that everything must be changed overnight and that the useful contribution to the country of certain means of transportation, such as trucking, should not be retained. In all fairness to thousands of Canadians and several areas of the country, the characteristics of some areas must also be taken into account. The assistance which must be continued must promote the economic development of those particular areas. When I speak of areas, I think above all of the western provinces and the maritimes. We must continue to give assistance, not token assistance, or on a ridiculously low scale, but substantial assistance, because if we consider here in parliament an economically strong Canada, on the road to progress, not only as a whole, but in all its important parts—and the ten provinces are important economically—the federal government cannot afford, whatever the legislation, to pass drastic and expeditious measures which would put some areas of Canada at a disadvantage.

And when I hear the fears expressed by hon. members from the maritimes and western Canada, I congratulate them for taking a stand and warning the government, and the officials who will see to the administration of the new transport board of Canada, against proceeding too quickly in the administrative field with regard to unification and co-ordination. We will have to try to avoid serious discrimination, so that Canadians from coast to coast will not see in the field of transportation discrimination from one area to another or from one transportation system to another but will feel that throughout the country, whether they live in the west, in central Canada, in the maritimes or elsewhere, the laws of the central government do not discriminate against any Canadian because he lives in one province rather than in another.

Some recommendations of the MacPherson commission apply to uneconomic railway lines. For instance, in the notes which have been sent to us by the officials of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill), it is indicated that the commission recommends that the railways should not be asked to