

Borrowing Authority Act

From the perspective of transportation as a whole, the importance of this bill cannot be overstated. As members of this chamber are very well aware, transportation has played a significant role in the development of this vast country and in keeping it together. The excellent movement of passengers has helped to bring Canadians closer together and has contributed to their high standard of living. An effective system for the transportation of goods has permitted, and contributed to, the development of the Canadian economy.

Responsibility for management of the national transportation system from the federal perspective falls under the jurisdiction of Transport Canada, the Canadian Transport Commission and a handful of Crown corporations such as Air Canada, CN, the National Harbours Board, the Northern Transportation Company Limited, the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority and four pilotage authorities.

Transport Canada is a very complex operating department, as I am beginning to find out in my new role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport. Because it is responsible for air, marine and portions of the surface modes of transport, its activities affect the daily lives of most Canadians in some way. In addition to employing some 22,000 persons Transport Canada and the Canadian Transport Commission expend large sums on the nation's transportation system. Expenditures for 1980-81 by Transport Canada and the CTC totalled \$1.8 billion.

I mentioned the number of people Transport Canada employs, and I am very pleased to say that Transport Canada is an equal opportunities employer. It employs many women, many men and many handicapped persons. I want to emphasize that Transport Canada, as well as other departments, is an equal opportunities employer.

The role of Transport Canada is to attend to the development and operation of a safe and efficient national transportation system which contributes to the achievement of government objectives, and to operate specific elements of the system. That is a tall order and it costs a lot of money. Increasing demands are being placed on the federal government in relation to transportation needs. We are all concerned that transportation is developed, as far as is reasonably possible, to meet the needs of Canadians and to improve the economy. At the same time the government must always be prudent in managing its expenditures. It is of paramount importance, therefore, that funds for transportation are invested wisely, to use the words of the official critic of the New Democratic Party. The theme of my remarks today will be investing wisely the funds we are going to get through this borrowing bill.

The significance of transportation in terms of bringing this country together and forming a link between the remote areas of Canada and the more established centres was recognized at a very early stage in this country's history. To illustrate, in 1881 the federal government struck an agreement with the Canadian Pacific Railway to build a transcontinental rail link. The agreement provided for \$25 million in subsidies and 33 million acres in land grants. In contrast to the dollars set aside today even for modest projects the figures are not substantial,

but in terms of what that investment accomplished they are indeed significant.

Later on, in 1897, to complete the link—both psychological and physically, if I can say so—another agreement was signed with CPR to build the Crownsnest Pass line, a topic about which we have heard much in the last few months. This line, approximately 300 miles long, was constructed to keep American railroads out of that part of southern British Columbia. Again, it was an investment for the future in more ways than simply an investment of dollars. It was the staking of a physical claim on the future wealth and prosperity of British Columbia for the benefit of all Canadians both east and west of the Rockies.

• (1700)

The need to invest dollars in transportation was recognized then and is still considered an absolute necessity in order to stimulate economic growth. Unless major investments by the railways proceed, capacity restraint in the western transportation system will soon be evident. By now all hon. members should be aware of the government's commitment of \$3.2 billion over the next four years toward the movement of grain. This money will help overcome the critical shortfall in railway revenues and assist the railways in making the much needed investments.

Out of these funds an order was placed by the federal government in May of this year for the construction of 1,280 hopper cars for grain service in western Canada. This order, worth approximately \$80 million, will help alleviate the serious unemployment situation by creating 1,500 jobs in the builders' plants in Trenton, Nova Scotia, Sorel, Quebec, and Hamilton, Ontario, for a period of two or three months and 750 jobs will also be created with suppliers for the same period of time.

In November, 1981, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) signed an agreement with representatives of Canada's two major railways involving expenditures of \$255 million for continued branch lines to 1984. The agreement further strengthens the goal of a modernized branch line network. Total expenditures on the rehabilitation program will reach \$495 million by 1984, a considerable investment in western Canada which will benefit all Canadians.

Complementary investment is required, of course, to accommodate the anticipated growth in the movement of bulk products, especially in the west. I should like to give a few examples of port projects, sponsored in part or in whole with federal funds.

In August, 1980, an agreement was signed with the government of British Columbia and the Nanaimo Harbour Commission for the development of a two-berth forest products shipping terminal at Duke Point, Nanaimo. The total cost was \$20.9 million, including a \$6.3 million federal government contribution. The initial phase, including the construction of the two wharves, was completed in September, 1981.

In September, 1980, agreement was reached with the Prince Rupert grain consortium for the development of a three