

vehicles that could operate efficiently, cheaply, and economically in the Arctic regions in the sea ice. Why not utilize what has already been proven to be capable of running in cold regions, and have those vehicles used as alternates to building roads?

Obviously, there are no great riches in the Arctic at the present time. Mines are closing. In my riding, for example, Cullaton Lake is closing, Pine Point is closing, Nanisivik maybe has two years left. In spite of the fact that many Canadians may hear about opposition to development, there are people who rely on employment from those few jobs that the companies provide. It is very expensive to build roads. There are only two or three months of shipping season open in the summertime. In some places ships cannot go at all. For example, a place called Pelly Bay on the north Arctic coast is a small community where, in most decades, the ice never leaves. Icebreakers may be able to go there, but all the houses, all the buildings, all the food,— everything comes by air all the way from Yellowknife. The people in those communities are expected to pay for canned goods, milk, bread, and vegetables, if they are available, with the income received from family allowances or welfare.

Some people may have heard about the high birth rate in the North. That is because people have learned to use family allowances as a means of income, because there is nothing else. The people used to be able to sell fur-bearing animals to the Hudson's Bay Company. In most cases now the Hudson's Bay Company will not take a second look at them. The seal industry in Baffin Island used to provide at least a semblance of independence and some pride, but that too is gone.

● (1250)

I know that Canadians are generous because they provide assistance to starving people in Ethiopia and in other parts of the world. I also know that if Canadians wished, they could provide the necessary services to the people up there. There are not many of them; there are only 17,000 people. In fact, there are about 20,000 or 25,000 people in the whole northern Canadian Arctic region. I know Canadians can be generous. I know the Government can be generous and can overrule some of the strict guidelines which prevent innovative development by providing transportation facilities other than through airlines.

I believe I have sufficiently expounded on what living in the North is like. Perhaps I should mention my experience in a little place called Whale Cove in southern Keewatin, just north of the Province of Manitoba. It faces some of the highest prices of any community in terms of canned milk and bread. I once visited there and proceeded to buy a small box of canned goods and a few other staples. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that I did not have enough money in my pocket at that time to pay for the box of groceries because it cost over \$100? One has to be up there to believe it. One has to go up there to believe some of the unbelievable costs faced by the people there, especially welfare recipients.

### *National Transportation Act, 1986*

I am not talking about territorial and federal Government employees. They have benefits coming out of their ears. In fact many government people are lobbying me now and saying "if you touch our northern benefits and our holidays to the south, we will have a very difficult time". It is very difficult to have any sympathy at all for people who say things of that nature, when one knows that there are people who are trying to live on welfare.

Just a few weeks ago I almost got into trouble with territorial civil servants because I lobbied on behalf of welfare recipients, so that they could receive a portion of their welfare cheques in cash to buy gas and oil to go hunting for a hundred pounds of meat rather than purchasing expensive canned food from the co-op or from Hudson's Bay.

It is difficult for many people to make a living up North, yet civil servants have northern allowances, isolation pay, housing benefits such as staff housing, and goodness knows what else. However, we hear them say that because the Government is going to tax them to make it equitable, they will have a very difficult time. I have a very difficult time believing something like this because I know people who do not have jobs. There are not very many jobs in that region. Most Canadians probably know that. It is very difficult for people who live on welfare, on family allowances, or on old age pensions. They cannot order food from the south as can government employees. They do not have the knowledge and they do not have communication with southern suppliers. Fortunately they can at least get some country food such as caribou and fish. Their livelihood from fur-bearing animals has already been destroyed. We are told that about "fur-made-Canada"; that fur traders who went from the East to the West, to the interior, and to the Arctic regions built this country. Unfortunately, I suppose, the lack of a market for the commodity which built the country is now destroying part of the culture of the northern region.

This is why I have tried very hard to convince the Government and the House to find it in their hearts to provide a small amount of equity and, at the very least, to start research into what alternative forms of travel can be provided for the North.

We all know that travelling by air is very expensive and very difficult, not only for people who must fly but also for those who operate aircraft in minus 40 degree temperatures. They have to heat buildings and to keep their airplanes running. They try to maintain a semblance of happiness for the small flying public who are disappointed many times when airplanes do not arrive because they are frozen solid or fuel lines have been frozen. Those are the kinds of conditions flying companies have to face. I am not saying that they are the culprits.

**Mr. McCurdy:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hesitate to interrupt this eloquent portrayal of the North, which I think has done all of us good. I just remind my colleague that he has been accorded indefinite time. Given what my colleagues and I consider the very great value of this eloquent portrayal of the needs of the North, I hope he will