

Committee on Railways and Shipping

to have a population of from 700,000 to 800,000 people. The resources of our provinces must therefore be developed to provide jobs and wealth that will support these 800,000 people with a standard of living comparable to that which will obtain on the mainland 20 years hence. The distribution of that population will be determined largely by the distribution of the natural resources that are to be developed. Transportation will therefore play a vital role.

Three questions naturally arise. First, is our present system of transportation adequate to the task that it will be called upon to perform? The second question is: If not, is it capable of being transformed and made adequate through improvement? The third question is: If this is impossible, what should be done?

In my opinion, the present system is not adequate and can never become adequate to the task of integrating the economy of the province of Newfoundland with that of the mainland of Canada to such a degree as will permit the province to assimilate and support 800,000 people in the next 25 years. The reason for this appears to me to be very simple. Our present transportation was never intended to do that job. It was not built with that in mind, and therefore it cannot be satisfactorily adapted.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Newfoundland developed as an economic sociological adjunct of Great Britain. People settled in St. John's and along the northeast coast, and all the large settlements had direct ties with the west of England. During the period of 1900 to 1950, these ties with the old country gradually weakened, and along the south and west coasts there began to develop ties with the United States and with the mainland of Canada. St. John's, however, during that period, retained and partly strengthened its position as the economic hub of our province, particularly when a tenuous system of land transportation began to develop with the opening of the railway and the building of the road system.

That was all right as long as Newfoundland was looking eastward. With confederation, however, have come modifications of our channels of commerce. Trade with mainland Canada increased from \$40 million in 1939 to over \$150 million at the present time. St. John's, which for centuries was the front door and the principal exporting and importing centre, has now become the back door of our island. Instead of being our nearest point of contact to the country with which we have most in common politically and economically, it has now become our most inaccessible point in the whole province from

the point of view of our new political and commercial ties, which have resulted from confederation.

Like Gaul, Newfoundland is divided into three physiographic units, each of which has some important subdivisions that have developed more or less as economic entities. The first of these units may be called the west coast area, which can be represented on a map by a line drawn from the bottom of La Poile bay on the southwest coast to the bottom of Green bay on the northeast coast. The second unit is the central portion of the island, which lies east of the line I have just described to the isthmus of Avalon. The third unit is the Avalon peninsula itself.

The economic centre of the west coast area is Corner Brook, which with its main industry dominates and at the same time provides the hub of the economy of this region. An important subdivision of this area is the St. George's bay area, which stretches south far enough to include Port aux Basques. The importance and independence of this subdivision has been accentuated in recent years by the United States defence installations. This whole unit has developed an economy which to a large extent is independent of the rest of the province. The high and rugged land stretching from La Poile to Cape St. John makes the development of a transportation system between the west coast and the rest of the island very difficult and most costly.

In the northern part of the central portion, the economy is dominated by the Labrador and inshore fisheries, by the sawmill and paper development at Grand Falls and by the mining operations at Buchans. Here again there is a large measure of independence from St. John's.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It seems to me the hon. member is covering much more territory than is required for the purpose of discussing the merits of this motion.

Mr. Carter: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, if I have gone outside the limits of this resolution. My point was to lead up to the economic facts which must be taken into consideration if a suitable system of transportation is to be developed.

Mr. Speaker: I think the hon. member will agree with me that, once this resolution is adopted and the committee is set up, the committee will not have the authority to establish railroad lines.

Mr. Carter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I conclude may I say that my purpose in intervening was to emphasize one point,