

When one takes into consideration the enormous demand for foodstuffs, and the tremendous wealth and great productivity of the country, that condition can only arise because of the lack of proper transportation facilities. I am very sure that, whereas returned veterans are now going on to the land in and around Vancouver and other cities, were they assured of a proper outlet for their commodities this great area of which we are speaking would be quickly filled up.

My final point, Mr. Speaker, is this. All great cities start as distributing centres for the produce of the countryside. Then they increase, and so long as they have veins and arteries reaching out into the hinterland they thrive and prosper. But so soon as the development of the great natural resources of the hinterland of our country ceases, those cities will fail to increase, and if they fail to increase they will probably diminish in size and cease to prosper. Nothing can stand still; it must go ahead or it must go back. Here is one of the missing arteries into the great port and city of Vancouver.

I suggest that Toronto started as a centre of agricultural marketing and as the years went by it developed, burst into a great industrial city and contemporaneously into the greatest mining centre in North America. That city is growing now, and depends for its prosperity upon the rich mining areas of the north which are being opened up, and upon western Canada itself. Likewise we have Winnipeg, which again is a great city, but which has not achieved the same position of diversification as has Toronto. Winnipeg, I think, may be described without offence to anyone as a grain city. That is its lifeblood; that is why it exists. In Vancouver we have a similar situation. Vancouver is a great port, but at the present moment it is chiefly dependent for its existence and expansion on the logging industry. It is a great lumber city, but if it is to reach the stage of diversification which has been attained by the older and larger cities of Canada, it, too, must have the same opportunity for outlets as have those other cities. In the past years of war there has been a great influx of people into Vancouver. At least 60,000 of the 90,000 who came to British Columbia during the war years came to that city. We must now not only be a logging city and a port but develop a secondary industry and must become an industrial centre and a mining centre as well. We cannot do that unless our hinterland is developed. That one should have to go 1,500 miles around by Edmonton to get into the Peace River country is most ridiculous, and one which will not improve the balance of

population in British Columbia. If that balance is not improved the progress of Canada itself will be held back.

That is all I have to say, Mr. Speaker. For the reasons I have given I consider that this project can and should be undertaken, in the interest not only of the west but of the whole of Canada.

Mr. M. J. COLDWELL (Rosetown-Biggar): If I may say a word in support of this resolution, I do not think this debate should be confined wholly to hon. members who come from British Columbia and from Alberta, because it is a matter of national concern. After all, when one considers that the province of Alberta and this part of British Columbia which has been particularly described this afternoon contain, I believe, the very richest part of Canada, with probably the most sparse population, a country which has a hinterland of this description with a sparse population cannot be expected indefinitely to be able to hold such a country selfishly for its own ends. I believe the time has come when we should have a comprehensive national programme to develop the whole of the Canadian north country.

The hon. member for Cariboo (Mr. Irvine), who introduced this resolution this afternoon, is not supporting this proposal for the first time. I remember how the former member for Peace River (Mr. Kennedy), who was a member of the old U.F.A. group of which my hon. friend was also a member, used periodically to introduce a resolution here regarding a Peace River outlet.

I am very glad to rise, not only on behalf of myself but on behalf of those associated with me in this party, to support this resolution. In doing so, I submit this to the house. Transportation, after all, ought not to be considered wholly as a matter of profit and loss. We do not consider highways in that light, and if we want to develop the country we must have transportation that is fast and that will carry the heavy loads which are necessary to maintain production in an area such as the Peace River and the Cariboo. My mind goes back to a period before the war, and I hope that we also learned a lesson during the war, when there were people in the house and across the country who were constantly urging that certain railway lines be pulled up, that certain branches be discontinued, and that even the railways connecting east and west might be served over one line of steel.

All of us during the war realized how valuable those rails were to the country. Sometimes I think the Canadian Pacific Railway Company would probably be glad indeed if