

The Budget—Mr. Halliday

Mr. Landers: Many problems exist in the field of transportation. Due to the increase in population and the construction boom, traffic congestion has become intolerable. Immediate negotiations must commence between the federal government and the provincial governments to ensure completion of the Saint John throughway on an emergency basis. The Saint John winter port is badly in need of additional federal funding, not necessarily on a cost-recoverable formula. Although the National Harbours Board and the provincial government apparently could not agree on Rodney terminal, the terminal is almost completed. Some federal funding has been made available; however, the brunt of the cost of Rodney terminal is falling on the backs of the citizens of the province of New Brunswick. I call upon our government to lift the financial burden from the backs of my people and also to provide additional funding for a forest products terminal. Other terminals are needed as well: however, I would call upon government officials and National Harbours Board officials to consult the International Longshoremen's Association before deciding what to build and where to build it.

I now turn to the Saint John airport. A recent list of eight current priorities of the city of Saint John, released by the mayor and council of my city, called for improvement of the airport, including the lengthening of both runways, better navigational aids and lighting, better terminal amenities and improved air service. We are looking for direct, dedicated flights to Toronto, as a first priority, Montreal, Halifax and Boston, plus an improved regional air service and dedicated freight service.

I call upon my government to consider allowing blind and otherwise handicapped people, who have to be escorted to major cities for medical and other attention, to fly at a 50 per cent fare discount on Air Canada flights. Also, the escorts of blind or handicapped persons should be allowed to fly at a 50 per cent discount. If this fare structure were implemented, the present discrimination against such people requiring escorts would be eliminated. I wish to point out that in the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, sightless persons and their escorts are allowed a 50 per cent discount on intercity and interprovincial bus services. However, it takes 14 hours to travel from Saint John to Halifax, which is a long and boring trip for a sighted person but, I submit, it is a most painful and even longer trip for a sightless person. Therefore, the Canadian government should provide reduced air fares for blind and handicapped persons requiring escorts.

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me for this, my first speech in the House of Commons. It has been a fascinating study of human behaviour for me, sitting here at the back, listening to and observing 263 other hon. members perform, each in his or her own unique manner. With this event soon to be behind me, Mr. Speaker, you can probably count me as one further member whom you will have to keep in order in the future. Having said that, and acknowledging that at this stage of the first session of the thirtieth parliament it would seem inappropriate to congratulate Your Honour upon being elected Speaker of this House, as hon. members preceding me have so fittingly done, may I take this opportunity to commend and congratulate you on the skill and art which you have acquired and exercised in a short

[Mr. Forrester.]

few weeks in your role as Mr. Speaker. Not having been subjectively involved in the debates to date, I have been able to assess, I would say, dispassionately your handling of sometimes difficult situations in a manner which I have felt to be most creditable to the high office Your Honour holds on behalf of all hon. members.

I would say also, Mr. Speaker, that these remarks should be considered to apply equally to the Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees of the Whole House (Mr. Laniel), the Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole House (Mr. Penner) and the Assistant Deputy Chairman of the Committees of the Whole House (Mrs. Morin). As a new member, I have been impressed by the affability, friendliness and co-operative attitude displayed by the staff under your jurisdiction.

In a few days it will be 21 years since a member representing the constituency of Oxford has given a maiden speech in the House. On that occasion it was the late Wally Nesbitt who so faithfully represented Oxford in the House and whose privilege it was to speak at that time on behalf of his constituents. I am honoured both to be chosen as his successor and, indeed, to sit in the House. Inasmuch as there are only very few hon. members now in the House who were here 21 years ago, perhaps I can be forgiven if I offer a few comments in praise of my constituency.

Oxford is situated in the heart of southwestern Ontario. Interestingly enough, the village of Tavistock where I live, on the northern fringe of the riding, is probably farther from a significant body of water than any other municipality in Ontario. We are about equidistant from the three great lakes—Huron, Erie and Ontario. I hasten to admit, sir, that we do sit on the edge of the headwaters of the Thames River which, although it may dry up in the summer, develops into a significant river as it feeds the reservoir known as Pittcock Lake in Woodstock and courses on through the riding toward London and Lake Erie. Morphologically, the boundaries of the riding of Oxford correspond precisely to those of the county of Oxford. As a county in Ontario, we are unique in having been recently granted the privilege and responsibility of undergoing a political internal restructuring in lieu of a scheme of regionalization which has involved large areas of Ontario.

The economy of Oxford is quite diversified, with our population about equally divided between rural and urban dwellers. We are basically an agricultural community with a long and enviable record in the dairy industry. Although cheese-making was carried on in the very early days by pioneer settlers, the first cheese factory in Canada was established in 1863 near Norwich, in Oxford, to be followed two years later by the forerunners of the present Ingersoll Cheese Company which in 1866 produced the still famous mammoth cheese weighing over 7,000 pounds which was shown at the New York State Fair. One year later, in 1867, the Canadian Dairyman's Association was founded at Ingersoll with a convention attended by over 200 delegates from Canada and the United States. As a more timely note, I can say without fear of contradiction that both the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) would most certainly have been presented with a gift of