

*Transportation*

to support itself but able to come to the aid of the less privileged countries of this world.

I venture to say, Mr. Speaker, that the western farmer produces more wealth per hour of labour than any other worker in the world and it is therefore not surprising that he demands a fairly decent standard of living in return for this work. After all, a bushel of wheat can be made into so many loaves of bread. The western farmer is entitled to a raised standard of living in return for the tremendous efficiency with which he performs his tasks. To those people who look at him with envy I will say: Come on out and help us reap this harvest. We are short of thousands of labourers and we cannot get them because other industries in Canada are draining our labour force. We are reaping great wealth from our crops. One of the reasons I hope the Crowsnest freight rates will be continued in the future is that these people are entitled to a fair return for their labours, which are bringing to Canada sufficient wealth to make a substantial change in our balance of payments.

• (8:30 p.m.)

When we consider this transportation policy, I want the board which is going to be set up with regard to freight rates and railroads to consider seriously the effect on the trucking industry. I suggest that from time to time the railroads have not performed the services they might have performed, so we have developed a tremendous trucking industry in this country. I do not believe the people who have put their life's work and their life's savings into this business should be brushed aside. When we think about the rationalization of the railways, let us think also about the rationalization of the highways. Let us tie in the whole of our national highways program with this transportation program. I do not suggest however that we should put all the highways in Canada under this board. I am a little bit alarmed about the power the board could gather unto itself, unless parliament watches very carefully and puts in some safeguards to see that they do not become an all-absorbing empire. After all, an empire may not have the vision which I hope this board will have, and we might hold up the development of Canada in this last half of the twentieth century which rightly belongs to her.

I should like to make sure that when the railroads come forward with their figures parliament will take a good look at those

figures, to ascertain whether or not the excuses the railroads give for not making money are real. In the past there has been a tremendous amount of waste, and not due to branch lines. If you look at a map of Canada today you will see the way these railroads radiate out from the main business centres, instead of being linked up properly across the country. Then you can understand why it is difficult for the railroads to haul any tonnage between the major centres without waste. As an example, we may take the city of Edmonton. The railway lines branch out of Edmonton like the fingers on your hand. In at least two places in Saskatchewan near the Alberta boundary the railway links are not closed. In one case there is a gap of almost 40 miles and in another case there is a gap of 125 miles. If you want to ship something from one point to another, although the two points may be only 40 miles apart your goods have to travel over 600 miles because of this gap in the railway lines.

I personally took up this matter with officials of the Canadian National and they told me that this was one method they used in trying to balance their books, that is charging freight rates over 600 miles. They did not think it was economic to close the 40 mile gap. These are things which I believe tend to put our railway system 50 years out of date.

I believe that this rail system of ours quite rightly should be tied in with a proper air policy. The air system in Canada today is far from adequate. Again, I should like to refer to the north. If you were talking about building an airport in a place like Fort Chipewyan, the air line officials would tell you that there are so few planes going into Fort Chipewyan there is no justification for building an airstrip. This is true because airplanes cannot land there. I do not know how in the world one can just sharpen a pencil, divide by 20 and say whether or not an airstrip should be built in a territory which so far has never been adequately covered. After many years Fort Chipewyan has an airstrip, but there are many places in the north country where airstrips are needed for development. We cannot take a cost figure or a per-ton mileage figure and say it is economic to build a railroad at some place, unless we guess. Unless we plan for the future, I think big mistakes will be made.

I hope this commission will look into the question of what they call pioneer rates. It is possible today for the railroads in northern