

Supply—Transport

Against this I should like to throw into focus the great needs of the port of Vancouver; a port which is a national trust and a national responsibility; a port which for hundreds of years to come will be the major mover of the heavy tonnage of commerce of this nation.

Mr. Chairman, may I call it one o'clock?

At one o'clock the committee took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The committee resumed at 2.30 p.m.

Mr. Payne: I am sure all members of the committee would wish me, before proceeding with my remarks, to welcome the hon. member for Essex East who, I see, is back in his place after a sojourn in hospital.

At one o'clock I was discussing certain matters concerning the policies of Trans-Canada Air Lines. I had made brief mention of the heavy capital spending program upon which this crown corporation is in the midst of undertaking at this time a program which represents the acquisition of new aircraft at a cost in excess of \$200 million. I would point out that this large sum represents an expenditure by and on behalf of the people of Canada, since this is a crown corporation controlled in an indirect form through the shareholdings by the Canadian National Railways, another crown corporation.

Here surely is a case where the people of Canada and certainly the members of this chamber should take a serious look at this serious situation. Huge sums of money are being spent on aircraft to provide a service which private enterprise is ready and capable of providing, a service which private enterprise has amply proved its ability to supply. Surely this is a direction in which the spending of public money is not justified.

As I said earlier, the national facilities which do require the expenditure of money on the part of the nation are our ports, not only the port of Vancouver but other ports; the facilities which allow the industry and commerce of this country to be carried on and which determine the ability of this exporting nation to meet and service its export requirements. Surely at this time we should take a serious look at what certain of these crown corporations are doing—I refer particularly to T.C.A.—and what they are calling for by way of public funds to provide a service which, as I said, could and would be provided adequately and at competitive rates by private enterprise which, in addition to discharging these functions, would pay tax revenue to the nation.

[Mr. Payne.]

Mr. Winch: May I ask the hon. member a question? Who for years pioneered this service in Canada?

Mr. Payne: In answer to the hon. member for Vancouver East I would say there is no doubt T.C.A. did play a certain pioneering role, but I would point out to the hon. member that many another air line in Canada pioneered routes and provided service for the public in regions where T.C.A. never made a move. I would remind the committee of the work done by Mackenzie Air Service and Canadian Airways, which opened up the vast mineral area to the north of Vancouver, serving the upper regions around Aklavik and the Mackenzie river and bringing progress to the Canadian north. It was not only T.C.A. which pioneered; these other lines pioneered. In addition, they provided service on a competitive basis and paid taxes, too, while the T.C.A. pioneering effort, if you can call it that, was to establish a service between the major centres of population in Canada, frequently at a loss and requiring heavy subsidy.

I say now is the time when we must give some thought to where public spending should go. Should we be paying \$250 million for aircraft which private enterprise could provide on a competitive basis for our external and internal air services, or should we spend that money on the port facilities of this nation in order to increase the efficiency of our export industry? Mr. Chairman, I think the answer to this question is simple.

There are two further points I should like to mention briefly. Last year the predecessor of our current minister announced the formation of the Canadian coastal protective services. I realize now, as a result of the announcement made earlier this session, that the current Minister of Transport is actively pursuing the establishment of this program, and has arranged for the provision of certain craft which will make this service much more effective and efficient. On behalf of the people of my area I wish to congratulate the minister for this move, and trust that it will go forward with haste, as I am sure the need for coastguard service, on the Atlantic as well as the Pacific coast, is urgent.

I should also like to congratulate the minister in regard to the shipbuilding assistance program recently announced. Western Canada's largest shipyards are located in my area, and I can assure the minister that this program of assistance will be most useful in the provision of urgently needed new coastal ships. This assistance will help in the provision of new deep-sea bottoms on the oceans of the world, and will mean a great deal to