

occurring today, it has proven to be a profitable investment. The people of Canada got their money back, and more. It is now an integral part of the Canadian National Railways system and pays its way.

Then there is the Dempster Highway, the road going through Yukon into the Mackenzie Delta. This was proposed many years ago in the Diefenbaker era, and it received a great deal of criticism at that time. It was completed about the time the Right Hon. John George Diefenbaker died. Already it has proven its worth, as oil and gas developments are occurring in the Mackenzie Delta and the Beaufort Sea. The Dempster Highway provides a vital link to that oil and gas rich part of Canada.

I should like to touch on a few distinct sectors of the transportation industry which exist in the North and comment briefly on them, Mr. Speaker. First of all, there is air transportation. Of all sectors this is probably the one that has done the best job. That may be because air transportation is under the control of the Department of Transport and not the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. I shall have more to say about that particular Department later.

The Arctic airports program is a joint program of the federal and territorial Governments and has worked out extremely well. There has been some slowness in the system but that has to be expected. A couple of years ago I wrote to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) with respect to the Norman Wells airport, which is now extremely busy and likely to be more so in the coming months, asking that something be done to upgrade the facilities and that planning be done for pipeline and oil field expansion. So far that has not taken place.

Generally speaking, the airports branch of the Department of Transport has done a pretty good job. Our main complaints are not against the Department as such, but rather against the Air Transport Committee of the CTC. There could be improvements in the licensing of certain operations and in the scheduling of service.

With respect to rail service, I already mentioned the Pine Point railway which has proven to be quite successful. I have heard the Hon. Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) speak about the White Pass and Yukon railway many times in this House. He has said that if it is to be an effective means of transportation of products in and out of Yukon, it must be upgraded. There should be a standard-gauge track and the rolling stock which was originally brought into the country in the early 1900s should be replaced.

The railway into Churchill, Manitoba, which is the natural route into the heartland of western Canada, must be upgraded. It should be reballasted and the railbed should be improved. Perhaps we could use the new geotextiles to stabilize it. We must replace existing rail with heavier rail so that modern rolling stock instead of old boxcars can be used. It is a natural route for the transportation of grain, potash, coal and other commodities out of the Canadian heartland.

Northern Canada Transportation

• (1620)

I want to make a few remarks with respect to water transportation. The Port of Churchill immediately comes to mind. Port facilities at that location must be expanded. I understand it is the intention of the Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy) to go into this matter in detail, so I will skip over it now although it is very important.

New port construction techniques in Arctic areas have been developed. I could cite as an example the construction which went on in connection with the Polaris mines. We should now start looking at the area of the Beaufort coast. There is need for a proper port facility there. In the not too distant future there will be need for a major oil and gas port in the Beaufort Sea, for which we should definitely start planning now. Despite some progress in the private sector—and I am thinking of Kigoriak, for instance—Canada lags in development of commercial icebreakers—and that is probably the bright spot—military ones such as naval icebreakers and vessels for the Canadian Coast Guard.

If ever the United States and the U.S.S.R. were to engage in a naval battle in Canadian Arctic waters when they are ice-covered, they have the correct naval equipment with ice-breaking capabilities, but we would only be able to sit on the iceflows and keep score. This is all we would be able to do.

I look forward to the time when the Northwest Passage will be open for the peaceful commerce of all nations. I would like to see the Northwest Passage through Lancaster Sound, Prince of Wales Strait, and across the northern part of Yukon and Alaska, operated in a manner not dissimilar to the Seaway. Obviously it would be expensive to keep the shipping lanes open and to provide the necessary navigational aids. Denmark, Canada, the United States and potential user nations such as Japan, should get together to come up with a joint system of management of navigation in the Northwest Passage. There is a need for better charts and navigational facilities to complement the Canadian Hydrographic service on the work being done in Arctic waters and a hope they would go from strength to strength.

The Mackenzie River system, according to officers of Northern Transportation Company Limited, needs to have spent on it somewhere in the order of \$75 million to upgrade it into a major, proper waterway. In years of shallow water, if conditions get any worse, we will have to put wheels on the barges and push them down the river bed. This \$75 million does not have to be spent all at once. There are a few major bottlenecks on which we could concentrate to make the waterway one that could be relied on. Then we could load barges to their full capacities instead of only putting on half-loads. We have to look to potential threats to navigation on the Mackenzie River system such as the proposed Liard Dam in British Columbia.

Now I should like to make a few comments with respect to roads. The worst record of the Government is with respect to roads. In the 1950s and 1960s there were ambitious programs under Conservative Governments. We worked on the Mackenzie Highway and on the Dempster Highway; we upgraded the