

I want to say a few words about transportation. It is my view that equitable freight rates and good roads are important in developing the Canadian economy, as are our very worth-while policies of regional economic expansion. We in the Ottawa valley have always been plagued with unsatisfactory road conditions. If there is one thing we badly need, it is a good highway artery.

Let me give the House a good example of what I mean. The bridge in the centre of the town of Petawawa that spans the Petawawa River was built before the first troops moved into Base Petawawa in 1907. Today, it is called upon to handle all the traffic moving into Base Petawawa from various parts of the country, as well as traffic destined for Chalk River. Invariably there is a big traffic jam right in the middle of the town of Petawawa during the rush hour, and it is nothing for cars to be lined up for three miles. One morning about two weeks ago the nuclear laboratories at Chalk River lost \$2,000 in wages which the Crown Corporation had to absorb because employees were late through no fault of their own. Renfrew County Council has brought this problem to the attention of the Minister of Highways of Ontario. It sent a resolution to the Minister of Highways requesting the early completion of the proposed highway 417. The hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton (Mr. McBride) and myself were asked to support this brief, and we did so.

In reply to my letter to the Minister of Highways, the Hon. George E. Gomme, I was informed that roads were not the only problems in eastern Ontario, and that if we had really wanted to admit it, another problem was lack of economic development policies. He suggested that if the hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton and myself had succeeded in getting the area designated, this would have gone a long way toward solving our problems. In other words, the minister was trying to pass the buck to us. Let me tell the Hon. George Gomme that the hon. members for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton and Renfrew North have now done their homework and we are looking for him to do his. We want that highway and we want a new bridge at Petawawa. I see no reason for the federal government providing my constituents with a large number of jobs when their counterparts in the Ontario legislature cannot even provide decent transportation arteries for people to get to work.

If anyone wonders why I am spending so much time talking about a local matter, let them come to my house at week ends and receive some of the calls that flood in. I want to put the bread in the basket in which it properly belongs—at Queen's Park.

Mr. Aiken: We always blame Ottawa.

Mr. Hopkins: If we blamed Toronto as much as they blame Ottawa, we would be blaming them all the time. One thing I will say for this government is that it faces up squarely to its own problems and settles them.

Mr. Alkenbrack: Like unemployment.

Mr. Hopkins: The government is facing up to unemployment, too. The hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax

The Address—Mr. Hopkins

East (Mr. Forrestall) made some comments about the Department of National Defence. I do not think he mentioned the pay scales in the lower ranks, which is one matter that I suggest the new Minister of National Defence (Mr. Macdonald) review. I want to congratulate the new minister on his appointment and in the interest he is taking in his new job.

● (3:30 p.m.)

There are some things I should like to bring to his attention. The first concerns rental problems at Department of National Defence bases. I believe rents should be kept at a low level as an incentive, and as one of the privileges of members of the armed forces, because they do not have the same privileges when they are in block housing that they would have on civvy street. I think the whole matter of housing on DND bases should be reviewed. You know, there are times during long periods of peace when many people feel that the armed forces of a nation are out of style. It is my belief that it is healthy to be prepared and that it is healthy to keep a good force at all times. At no time should these people be given kicks in the teeth, especially at a time when we are asking them to perform a duty.

The average soldier today wishes to do a good job. It must be rather frustrating to him, however, while he is in the middle of performing a duty he has been asked to perform, to find there are those who criticize him, will not back him up, or in fact appear to be making statements on behalf of the people whom he has been asked to protect. We should always keep a proper perspective and remember that being unprepared is just as great a promoter of disturbance as anything else. If individuals interested in crime or in international controversies know that certain nations are not prepared, then such nations are open to attack from other nations or from criminals and so on wherever they may be.

Freight rates is another subject I have discussed in this House on other occasions. I deeply feel the day is coming when we must look at our two major railways in Canada in a realistic way to ensure that they provide the service we wish them to provide in order to tie this country together. They must not be allowed to go on charging high freight rates merely to balance their books. I think the burden of sharing the deficits of these transportation systems will have to rest with Parliament. Otherwise, large areas of this country will be prejudiced because companies will not settle in those areas unless proper freight rates are available to them.

This is a subject which is, and in the next 20 years will be, closely related to pollution. If we do not have an equitable freight rate policy to provide an incentive to industry to move into the slow growth areas of Canada in the next few years, then industry will continue to move into the large urban centres of Canada with the result that we will be required to spend more money on antipollution measures. Some of this money would be better spent on subsidization of freight rates and the provision of a better economy for the slow growth areas of this country.