

Supply—Transport

this country and thus making Canada possible.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pickersgill: I also think that Canada would never have been the kind of country that some of us are proud to have it if we had not in 1949 been willing to do one or two quite revolutionary things that were quite upsetting to the existing federal-provincial relations, as the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam well knows, in order to make it possible for a provincial government to exist in Newfoundland and thereby to bring Newfoundland into confederation.

Now the price that we have to pay to conserve this half continent as a separate country is probably in many ways, financially and economically, higher than it would have been to take the alternative of throwing up our hands and asking the United States to take us in on some kind of terms.

Mr. Peters: Just because we cannot run our railroads?

Mr. Pickersgill: Well, the hon. member says that that is just because we cannot run our railways. Notwithstanding what one hon. member said about the superior efficiency of the railways he travelled on in Egypt, India and so on, I do not think he intended us to take that very seriously. Whatever grievances we may have against the Canadian railways, I do not think that their capacity to run railways is in question at all. There may be many questions about the manner in which they do run them, but about the capacity of Canadians to run railways—well, I think that is as great as that of any railwaymen anywhere.

What I want to say I think I can put into one sentence. It is that my conception of the foundation of a national transportation policy is ultimately to have the best possible transportation, by the best mode that we can get and that we can afford in relation to our total production, so that we do not spend all our income or too large a part of it just on transportation. There are some other benefits, I would imagine, that Canadians want out of their lives as well as transportation. My conception would be that wherever possible, that is wherever it is reasonably possible, transportation should be paid for by the users, and that the government should look very hard at every case where a subsidy is asked for to make sure that what is required

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

is really, in national terms, worth the subsidy. I think, if it is necessary for the preservation of any part of British Columbia or of Vancouver island to provide shipbuilding subsidies for ferries, it would not break my heart to have to change my view. If I may be parenthetic about it, I do think that, for the first time, the people of British Columbia know that one third the cost of these ferries came out of the treasury at Ottawa. They would not have known that at all if this policy had not been announced the other day and if the premier had not complained about being so badly treated. If we came to the conclusion that Mr. Bennett would build the ferries in Japan unless we gave him a subsidy, then rather than have him go to Japan I think we ought to take another look at the question.

An hon. Member: He ought to go too.

Mr. Pickersgill: Well, if it is just a question of Mr. Bennett's going—

Mr. More: Would the minister say that the premier of Newfoundland lets the people there know that there are some shared costs? I have never met anyone from Newfoundland yet who did not think that everything came from Joey.

Mr. Pickersgill: I will tell the hon. gentleman that the federal government, since the present government came into office, has been paying in the four Atlantic provinces \$90 out of every \$100 of the cost of the trans-Canada highway. In the province of Newfoundland, on every stretch of highway that was being built during the last three years—and I might add that the highway is now completed—there was a sign saying: "We will finish the drive in 1965, thanks to Mr. Pearson." I point out that there are no signs like that in Nova Scotia.

The Chairman: Order, please.

Mr. More: Were those signs put up in 1963, and moved from place to place?

Mr. Pickersgill: Yes, they were moved from place to place as the road was finished.

An hon. Member: Who paid for the signs?

Mr. Pickersgill: I would be willing to pay for the signs for Mr. Stanfield, if he would put them up.

An hon. Member: I am sure that Premier Stanfield would not mind paying for them.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I do not know whether I am running out of time.