

*Supply—Transport*

It will be no surprise to the minister if I suggest to him that I and the people of my constituency have a continuing interest in the question of access to Vancouver International Airport. In the past two sessions of parliament I have introduced resolutions calling for the construction, with federal participation, of either a bridge or tunnel directly from the city of Vancouver to Sea Island where Vancouver airport is located. I will not go over the whole matter again, but simply remind the minister that at present one has to cross two bridges from the mainland to get to the airport, and that one of these bridges is a two-lane swingspan bridge, that it has been out of commission at times, that when it is out of commission or when it is open Vancouver International Airport, the third most important airport in the country, is cut off from the mainland altogether.

I believe there have been some discussions about this matter between the Department of Transport and the British Columbia department of highways. I imagine there has been no agreement as yet on a sharing basis, but I would like to have the minister report at some time on that point.

The new terminal at Vancouver airport is beginning to be constructed. The groundwork is done and I believe the actual construction will soon start. It is scheduled for completion in 1967, and I hope by 1967 we could make a start on a better approach to the airport, which is located in Richmond.

There is another matter concerning the airport which is of interest to a number of people in my constituency. The airport is located on Sea Island. At the present time the Department of Transport owns most of that island. However, two or three residential subdivisions still remain on the island, and the people in one of these subdivisions in particular have cause for concern. The airport is constantly expanding. The department is buying up new property all the time, but these people do not know whether the government will eventually want their property or not.

The subdivision I have in mind in particular is called the Cora Brown subdivision, a Veterans Land Act settlement. It is very difficult to sell homes in that area. It is also very difficult to borrow money to make improvements to those homes. In fact a few years ago the people there could not borrow money at all and the Department of Veterans Affairs had to make loans available to them because private borrowing was denied to

[Mr. Prittie.]

them. There will be a tendency for this subdivision, this group of homes, to go downhill unless some decision is made soon concerning the Department of Transport's long-range plans for the airport.

I notice that the other day in Vancouver Dr. T. G. Howe, regional director of the department of transport for B.C. was speaking to a service club, and he talked about the need for new and longer runways. He talked about the amount of air freight to be handled in Vancouver, which will probably be multiplied several times in the next few years, and he said new terminals would be necessary for this freight and new runways would be required for this type of cargo. Therefore I would ask the minister, and the officials concerned in his department about these things, to have a look at their land requirements on Sea Island so that the people who are still resident there can have some assurance of what is to happen in the future.

If necessary perhaps they could be bought out, and if their homes are not required right away they could be rented back to them for a period of a year or so. It is necessary that some decision be made before long.

Finally, there is one matter of personnel concerning the Department of Transport to which I wish to make reference. Members of parliament from the lower mainland of B.C. have been getting quite a number of communications from the radio operators employed by the department. There seems to be a great deal of dissatisfaction about the lack of promotion in the department, and about the pay rates paid to these employees, pay rates which they feel are not commensurate with their duties and the amount of training they have had.

I would suggest it is most unsatisfactory to have a group of employees who feel this way about their working conditions. They have been making some applications to the department through the Civil Service Commission, through their employees association, which I believe is the Civil Service Association of Canada, and I would ask the minister to instruct the officials of his department to take a look at this problem and try to regulate it as soon as possible.

Otherwise I do not think they are going to get the very best work from these employees, these radio operators, who are doing work of great importance. They are concerned with the whole question of air traffic control and the lives of air travellers depend on the efficient work of these people. I would