

way which runs in a semi-circle from St. John's right up north, across to the west coast and down to Port aux Basques—nearly 600 miles of it. I am not a zealot in this matter, but it used almost to break my heart to see the amount of good agricultural land that was destroyed in the building of that highway. Some of that destruction was inevitable if we were to have a highway, but in some instances that was not so and not enough care was taken. I am reminded of the old dictum, that war is too important to be left to generals. The building of highways and airports is too important to be left to engineers.

Again and again I have seen instances of highways being built through good agricultural land because the engineers said that that was the route the highway should follow. The highway should not have followed that route at all. I can give a simple example. Near where we have our little place in the country we had to build a five-mile access road. Senator Carter and other Newfoundlanders will remember this. It is in the Foxtrap area, and the road is known as the Foxtrap access road. It is only five miles, but, when it was pushed through, many acres of lovely agricultural land were destroyed. No one gave it a second thought, and the land is now gone. We do not have that much agricultural land in Newfoundland that we can afford to be so extravagant and nonchalant about it—and we do not have that much in Canada, either.

I offer another example—a personal one. In the 1940s when I was at the University of Toronto we built a home in northwest Toronto near Eglinton Avenue West, which was then on the outskirts. I would suspect that that house today is in the geographical centre of the city of Toronto. All the land in that area was agricultural, and it has all gone—thousands and thousands of acres of it.

During the last few years the Newfoundland government and the Government of Canada, with most of the money coming from the federal treasury, have been building an arterial road into St. John's. That arterial road comes in through the Waterford River Valley, and it has destroyed hundreds of acres of agricultural land. We had to have an arterial road coming into St. John's in addition to the existing roads, but I am not so sure, that we had to have it where it is now. That means that while we benefit in some ways from an arterial road, Newfoundland is made all the poorer by the fact that that good land has been lost.

Allow me to make the point that the reason why more agricultural land is not utilized in Newfoundland is not that there is no agricultural land or that it is not good agricultural land; it is that vegetable growing, as in Prince Edward Island, is not always economic. That is the simple reason.

In our little place in the country we grow 20 different vegetables, solely for our own use. They are as good as any vegetables grown anywhere in Canada. But I could not produce pumpkins in competition with southern Ontario, because it costs me much more to produce them in Newfoundland than it would if I were living in southern Ontario. However, the land is there.

● (1420)

I cite that example to emphasize the fact that we cannot afford to destroy good agricultural land, whether it be in Newfoundland, southern Ontario or anywhere else. We

cannot afford to destroy even marginal agricultural land, because what is uneconomic and marginal today may very well be economic in 10, 15 or 20 years' time. We see that phenomenon time and time again.

What Thomas Malthus had to say about that 200 years ago is still true today. The production of food increases arithmetically, while the population increases geometrically. So far all birth control methods and propaganda have been unavailing. They have not been effective in putting a brake on the population explosion which has taken place all over the world, including Canada.

While we may not need the land in our time, our grandchildren will need all the land that is available.

I have one other thought to express before I finish. As I mentioned, an arterial road is being built into St. John's through the Waterford Valley to join up with the Trans-Canada Highway approximately 15 or 20 miles out of St. John's. The route is a beautiful one. A four-lane highway is planned with a boulevard in the centre. It is a straight road with a cloverleaf interchange, excellent shoulders, and so on. Without any doubt, it is a magnificent piece of engineering, and the road will be utilized. That road runs parallel to the Canadian National Railway line over which not one passenger has travelled in the last seven or eight years, because the passenger service in Newfoundland has been discontinued. It has been discontinued for the same reason that it has been discontinued in other parts of Canada, because the CNR—I speak with conviction on this—has deliberately and systematically downgraded the passenger service to the extent that people have lost their desire to travel by train.

On the one hand we have the spectacle of a great arterial road which has already cost \$30 million. If that sum had been applied to upgrading the CNR line, which runs from St. John's parallel to the arterial road, we could have had a wide gauge railway without a single curve or grade, carrying trains at a speed of 100 miles per hour or even better.

I find the situation extraordinary and fantastic. I have travelled on trains all over Europe, some of which travel at more than 100 miles per hour. There is no reason in the world why we should not have right here, between Ottawa and Montreal, and between Ottawa and Toronto, modern high speed trains which can carry tens of thousands of passengers back and forth between those centres at speeds of 100 to 120 miles per hour. If we had such train services, then obviously fewer people would use the airlines and highways. I suggest that this is a matter which should receive serious consideration.

Far from being outmoded relics of the past, railways should increasingly become an important means of transport of the future. The routes exist. The railroad in Newfoundland already exists. In upgrading it we would lose some 25 acres of land, whereas the construction of the arterial road has already destroyed hundreds of acres of good land, as has the construction of the Trans-Canada Highway, and every road and airport we have to build. I suggest—

**Hon. Mr. Buckwold:** Would the honourable senator permit a question? Is he suggesting that by improving rail passenger service we would eliminate the demand for land for highways?