

*Canadian National Railways and Air Canada*

the country to the other who are compelled by the existing service to agree with the minister. That is the situation in which Canada finds itself.

Perhaps the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) will not object if I say that in many instances the trucking industry is not competitive. The transportation industry should meet Canada's needs. That being so, if the industry is to meet the needs of those who want to move goods across this country, there is a field for trucks and a field for the railroads. Only too rarely are these two modes of transport truly competitive, to the advantage of producers, consumers and manufacturers. Each mode is governed by its own laws. It is tragic indeed to find that the transportation system across Canada has deteriorated to the point at which manufacturers must go into the transportation business, to the point at which they themselves can move according to schedule products which they have produced and, on the return trip, bring back on schedule raw materials they require. At one time the railways performed this service ably. That was the service which helped us to build and develop this country.

If perhaps I repeat some things which were said earlier today, I say them because I think they bear repeating. At one time it was possible in my area to call Montreal at five o'clock in the afternoon Atlantic standard time and obtain supplies or parts for repairs by express, which arrived by noon the next day. This took about 18 hours. Today, I very much doubt if you can get something loaded onto a car in 18 hours, let alone have it transported to a destination 450 miles away. Yet for year after year we have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into our transportation system which abuses this country with the poor service it gives.

There is much talk about building new railway cars. You could build a line of new cars stretching from Vancouver to Sydney, and if you cannot move them on schedule, if you cannot provide service to an industry which needs service, you have wasted your money. I wonder, as the hon. member for Crowfoot wondered, are we not wasting our money by providing cars for the railway system without first imposing on that system an onus for service? They are operating without any regulations, demands or guarantees to provide better service. Our transportation policy is merely a token to the grain producers of this country which in the long range may or may not do them some good. The apple industry in Nova Scotia is forced to buy containers to ship their product with the help of the government of Nova Scotia, yet we hear the Minister of Transport say we have no transportation policy. Every member of this House must say "aye, aye" to that because it is a fact.

● (2140)

We see processors of various goods and services buying their own trucks, delivering their own wares and finding return loads for those trucks in an area in which the rail service has failed utterly to deliver on schedule. Yet we have a bill before us asking to build towers and hotels and buy stock in a railroad—go the full gamut. However, we are not saying to the railroads or the transportation system of Canada, "It is high time you began to deliver." I do not buy the idea that the government does not have any authority over the railroads. One must be compelled to think that when the government has no authority, it does

[Mr. McCain.]

not want any authority and that it would not know how to handle the problem if it had. Otherwise it would have the authority. It took no time at all to impose an export tax on oil, a commodity over which it was presumed we had no control. It took no time to make a decision there would be no refineries built on the east coast of Canada, even though that was within provincial rights. They had authority to do that. I submit the government has the authority but does not know how to use it.

It was rather interesting to listen to the report of the chairman of the Canadian Transport Commission before the transport committee. One began to wonder whether he should be in the "Ice Capades" or the Winnipeg Ballet. Verbally he has the alacrity to perform in either. Physically he might lack some of the attributes he would require. No answers were forthcoming except that there was no authority, no regulation and the CTC is in fact a completely sterile organization without authority, and Canada suffers along as best it can without control over the transportation system.

We talk about competitive rates. Let us look at some of the rates that exist. Let us look at a product which is moved from Ontario to Quebec, a distance of over 500 miles, for 27 cents per hundredweight. The same product is moved within the province of Nova Scotia, a distance of 210 miles, for 47 cents per hundredweight. We talk about competitive rates. We talk about equality of opportunity in Canada. We talk about equality of opportunity in transportation. It is time we stopped talking and started doing something about this. I can cite another product on which the rates are the same. It involves a haul of something over 750 miles versus a haul of 425 miles. The rates are within one cent per hundredweight. We have no control over or competition in transportation.

I know I am repeating myself, but I wish there were some action. We look at the anomalous situation in which it is cheaper to transport some raw materials in the province of Ontario to the southwest corner of New Brunswick than to transfer them across New Brunswick to the southwest corner. I agree with the minister wholeheartedly that we have no transportation policy. I object to the members of this House being asked to vote money to continue a situation such as this. I have taken up this particular rate in New Brunswick. I get no answers and no satisfaction. There is no reason why it should be cheaper to bring it from Ontario by rail than to haul it across New Brunswick by rail, approximately half the distance.

Let us take a look at the export structure. Until approximately ten years ago it was the policy of the government to encourage trade with other countries and make us more competitive in world markets. However, since the present transportation act came into being, and since competition and supposed profitability of operation on every mile of track came into effect, we are out of competition with the United States on some items which the Atlantic area wishes to export. We are out of competition to the point of something like 25 cents per hundred in farm products. This often means the difference between profit and loss. Why don't we have a policy? Again I repeat myself, but this is a matter which was laid before the House early in the last session.