

Northern Canada Transportation

they enter into an acceptance of their responsibilities on a mature basis.

I have every confidence, Mr. Speaker, that the banks will be willing to undertake that responsibility. And, perhaps, as Members of Parliament, one of our obligations is that when clients call us, or when constituents call us, we should work with the banks; we should phone the banks and lay out the facts. I have found, when I do this, the banks are generally receptive.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): I am sorry to interrupt the Hon. Member. Pursuant to Standing Order 24(2), it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and move to the next stage of the proceedings.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Shall all items listed under Private Members' Notices of Motions preceding item No. 59 be allowed to stand by unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

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● (1610)

TRANSPORTATION

ADVISABILITY OF UPGRADING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS IN NORTHERN CANADA

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should consider the advisability of embarking on an ambitious program of upgrading transportation systems in Northern Canada.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to my motion, which suggests that the Government should embark upon an ambitious program of transportation system upgrading in the northern part of Canada, it is my purpose this afternoon to do what I can to resurrect the Diefenbaker "Vision of the North".

In doing so, I want to pay tribute to two honourable and eminent gentlemen, one of whom is still with us. I refer to the Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton) who was responsible for giving Diefenbaker his vision of the north. In his younger days the Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain spent many years in the northern parts of Canada. He is a gentleman who has always been 30 or 40 years ahead of his time. He saw the opportunities that would come with the development of a transportation system.

The second gentleman to whom I want to pay tribute is the late Hon. Member for Brandon-Souris, the Hon. Walter Dinsdale. In Diefenbaker's time he very ably filled the office of minister for the North.

For the last 20 years or so the vision has become clouded, however. Emphasis on transportation has declined because there is an underlying difference in the viewpoint of Hon.

Members opposite and Members on this side of the House. The Liberal view of Canada appears to be that of a little Canada. Liberals are inward-looking. They look at what exists already and put a wall around it. On this side of the House we tend to be outward-looking. At the time of the "Roads to Resources" program—that is, the Diefenbaker vision—we were ridiculed by Hon. Members opposite who described it as an igloo-to-igloo policy. I hope when they look back that they find such has not been the case and that the policy has paid dividends. Perhaps they will then change attitude.

We may be asked why we need an upgraded and improved transportation system in northern Canada. As someone from that part of the country, I look at the matter from a local viewpoint and say it would lower the cost of personal transportation and of the transportation of goods, and that this would eventually show up in the selling price.

In the last two elections in which I participated, I listened to debate between Liberal and NDP candidates. It was a kind of bidding match when each candidate, supported by his Party, claimed that if the people voted for his Party it would give them subsidies which would help to bring costs down. I did not become involved in that bidding match but tried to make the point that a more efficient transportation system and a more competitive transportation industry in the North would bring down the cost of living.

The NDP won that bidding match. Because it is never likely to form a Government it came up with the highest bid. And, of course, it did not succeed to office but the Party opposite did. Unfortunately, it then forgot about this little auction that had gone on. It did precisely the opposite of what it had promised and threatened to remove existing subsidies and to substantially increase taxes for northerners.

Looking at this from the national point of view, which is what we have to argue in this House, if Canada is not to be just a narrow strip of inhabited territory along the forty-ninth parallel, we must develop the hinterland of the country. We must bring northern Canada into the main stream. If we do not, you can bet your bottom dollar, Mr. Speaker, that someone else will come in and do that for us. Whatever our legal position is with respect to sovereignty over the northern part of Canada, we cannot neglect it; we cannot just leave it alone. There are millions and billions of people in the world who are short of land and short of resources. If we do not develop our northern reaches we will lose them by default. Someone else will eventually come in and develop them.

As I have said before, well planned ventures in transportation have been proven to pay dividends. The St. Lawrence Seaway is a prime example of this. It took great investment in time and effort but it has paid handsome dividends. One just needs to look at the volume of shipping and commerce it has generated.

A smaller example is the Pine Point railway which was constructed in the 1950s. Despite certain setbacks which are