

Transportation

announcements and inclusions in the expenditures for the fiscal year 1979-80. In addition to the improvements to the highways and the air facilities there will also be a detailed analysis arising from the ports policy bill, in the Atlantic area and, in particular, of course, Saint John, which has proven its competence in being able to handle the cargo traffic by surpassing Halifax in tonnage averages. I believe that it has been a long accepted fact that competition exists between the port of Halifax and the port of Saint John because of the dynamic leadership and the administration of those interested and concerned with the port facilities in Saint John. In a short period of time they have been able to bring this port up to and beyond the capacity of what they are able to accomplish at the Halifax port.

I would also like to take this occasion this evening to mention the importance of the ports in northern New Brunswick, not only the port of Belledune but also the port of Dalhousie. These ports are deep-water, year-round, ice-free ports. In the case of the Belledune port, they are able to ship ore from the zinc refinery and fertilizer, and concentrates, and from the tank farm which was just built in recent years by Shell Oil. I think this is a very significant development for this deep water port.

● (2120)

I am delighted to announce tonight that officials of the American Potash Company are also considering the port facilities at Belledune as a route for shipping potash when they go into production within the next 12 to 15 months in Sussex, New Brunswick. This has come about because of lack of capacity at the Saint John port at the moment.

People interested in the development of the Belledune port are encouraged that it will not only be used by Brunswick Mining and Smelting for the shipment of ore, and by Shell Oil as a petroleum port, but that other petroleum companies have expressed interest in locating tank farms at the site. It is a significant breakthrough that a company with the potential of the American Potash Company has, in recent weeks, indicated a sincere interest in making an in-depth analysis of the facilities available at Belledune for shipment of their product. I understand that the facilities exist at Belledune, and when the necessary agreements have been made with the Noranda group and with Brunswick Mining and Smelting, there is every possibility that potash could move through that port.

This is not to diminish, of course, the importance of the deep-water, ice-free port at Dalhousie. The International Pulp and Paper company ships some of the finest newsprint in the world to international markets through that port. It is also used for shipping ore. The F.W. Perrie Company and McCain Foods have shown an interest in using it for shipping potatoes to world markets.

This is a very significant development and will have more than a passing impact on the region. It will have a definite impact on the economy, and it encourages all those who have shown an interest in the continuing development of the port.

[Mr. Harquail.]

I think the port of Belledune in Gloucester County which is being developed by the Chaleur Development Corporation and the citizens interested in that area, as well as the Restigouche development, who are all concerned with the Port Commission in developing Dalhousie port, each standing on their own feet as regards their abilities to grow to their maximum potential, will bring additional growth to northern New Brunswick. Funds have recently been approved for the design and engineering of an additional zinc smelter at Belledune. The federal government will contribute \$1.5 million to the design and engineering of this plant, in co-operation with the province and Brunswick Mining and Smelting. All these things—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Frank Hamilton (Swift Current-Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker, I should like to thank the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) for introducing this motion. I certainly agree with what he said—that at the moment we have no understandable transportation policy. No one knows where we are going in the area of rail transportation. One thing that western farmers know very well, however, is that wherever this rail transportation mess is going, the grain sector will get there first. The minister said there was no terminal expansion at Vancouver until they offered incentives. He should know that they were offered guarantees of storage paid by farmers, but I am happy to say this was never accepted by the grain companies out there.

The minister praised VIA Rail. If the subsidy paid to VIA Rail were paid to bus transportation, every long distance traveller in Canada could travel free.

The minister made a great fuss about Tory governments and the prairie prime minister who, he said, did nothing for grain or grain transportation because so little grain was shipped, and so on. That is arrogant nonsense. Figures issued by the Canadian Wheat Board, over the signature of the minister, show that for the years 1963-64 the total export of wheat and flour equivalents was 592 million bushels or 23.4 per cent of world trade. This figure has never been exceeded. In the two best years that the minister can brag about, 1976-77, 494 million bushels of wheat and flour equivalents were exported, representing 21 per cent of world trade. Last year was the best year under this minister when 587 million bushels were exported, or 22 per cent of world trade. So far this year exports are 20 per cent below the same time last year. At the present time wheat is selling for \$5 per bushel at Vancouver.

The minister will probably argue that more varieties are in the stream now. The answer to that is that the farmers have been forced into the new varieties because this Liberal government could not move their wheat.

The hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Murta) dealt with the need for co-ordination of the whole system and indicated that no leadership was being shown by the minister. I should like to remind the House that a year and one half ago the Fraser