

The Address—Mr. Higgins

suggested that you are taking over dead property, but that is far from the case. I will not give you any real value because I cannot do so, but you can be quite sure that it is in the hundreds of millions of dollars. I put it to you that if Newfoundland went into confederation as a province and these services were not there, they would have to be provided by Canada. You are now taking over or have taken over a going concern. All we ask is that it be kept going.

In the speech from the throne, reference was made to the new air agreements between Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. I believe those agreements have been concluded. That is my understanding from the contents of the speech from the throne. I hope it is so. I understand that additional traffic stops in the United States and in the United Kingdom have been provided for Trans-Canada Air Lines. I speak without full knowledge of the facts, but from the information I have gathered the chief factor in the making of those agreements was the fact that Canada now controls Gander airport and Goose airport—Gander especially—which enabled Canada to bargain with the United Kingdom and with the United States and get the wonderful advantages she has obtained for our Trans-Canada Air Lines. When I speak of the value of Gander in this way I am speaking simply of the commercial value. But do not ever forget the strategic value in time of war of that great airport at Gander, of that great airport at Goose, of that other airport at Harmon field and of that other airport at Torbay; and do not ever forget that the beginning of the winning of the battle of the Atlantic took place right from our little island of Newfoundland.

There are seven major international air lines operating from Gander at the present time, namely Pan American Airways, Trans-World Airways, American Overseas Air Lines, British Overseas Airways, KOM of Holland and Sabena of Belgium, the Scandinavian Air Line System and of course Trans-Canada Air Lines. I believe there are also some five or six non-scheduled carriers operating out of Gander as well. This has meant regular employment for a considerable number of my fellow countrymen, and I sincerely hope that nothing will be allowed to interfere with the operations at Gander, as was stated recently by the chairman of the air transport board prior to the conclusion of these air agreements. If these United States air lines are refused permission to land at Gander or if their operations are in any way interfered with, it will be an extremely serious matter for a great number of Newfoundlanders employed there.

[Mr. Higgins.]

In addition, to further increase the earning power of this dominion we bring you our great fisheries, which, added to your own, will probably increase their value by one-third. The Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Mayhew) will probably remember the figure. Incidentally, for the benefit of hon. members from Cape Breton, I should like to quote to you an extract I read in a book issued by the food and agricultural organization of the United Nations entitled "Salted Cod and Related Species". The quotation is as follows:

The east coast fisheries of Canada, which are the only Canadian fisheries of importance to the salted fish trade, began in the early days, when Cabot voyaged to Newfoundland in 1497 and Jacques Cartier to Canada in 1534.

I presume the hon. members from Cape Breton are still interested in the landfall of Cabot. If so, that should settle the issue for all time. But, Mr. Speaker, the chief value of our fisheries in the present money crisis is in the fish that we ship to the United States. The great bulk of our fresh-frozen fish goes to the United States and of course payment is made in United States currency.

In connection with the fisheries, by the terms of union our fishery laws and our Newfoundland fisheries board are to continue for a period of five years. That is five years certain, and thereafter until changed by the parliament of Canada. I would like you to understand that the fisheries board is doing excellent work, and has since its inception, and I sincerely hope that no change will be made in its constitution in the future. I know that the chairman of the board, Mr. Raymond Gushue, has the full confidence of all the people of our country, and I understand that he is just as highly regarded by the chief officials of the fisheries department at Ottawa.

Included also in the assets which we bring to you are our pulp and paper industries, our two great mills situated at Corner Brook and Grand Falls. In Corner Brook some 7,500 permanent and seasonal workmen are employed and the annual pay roll approximates \$14 million. The annual productive capacity of the mills at Corner Brook is 300,000 tons of newsprint and 54 thousand tons of sulphite pulp. I have not the figures for the mills at Grand Falls but I understand they are somewhat lower. However, the annual turnout for both mills in 1948 was 382,000 tons, Newfoundland being the third in the list of countries producing newsprint, being exceeded only by the United States and by Canada herself. The largest percentage of our newsprint is being sold to the United States and of course being paid for in United States currency. This is another fine asset that we bring to you.