

*The Address—Mr. Nesbitt*

government has assumed the responsibility of promoting east-west transportation in an effort to promote the east-west flow of trade. In the discussions leading up to confederation, the building of railways for this purpose was a major concern. At the Quebec Conference, where the plans for confederation were discussed, two resolutions were passed on the subject:

1. The general government shall secure, without delay, the completion of the Intercolonial Railway from Rivière-du-Loup through New Brunswick to Truro, in Nova Scotia.

2. The Communications with the North-West Territory and the improvements required for the development of the trade of the great west with the seaboard, are regarded by this conference as subjects of the highest importance to the federated provinces, and shall be prosecuted at the earliest possible period that the state of the finances will permit.

• (12:40 p.m.)

As the great historian of transportation in Canada, George Glazebrook, has written:

The movement toward a single British country in North America, as approached from the political point of view, coincide in time with the recognition, from the economic point of view, of the end of the continental projects (to build north-south railway links)...It was...the combination of these two groups of motives that gave enough strength to the union movement to carry it to completion.

After confederation of the original four provinces, the construction of railways to the west formed an important part of the agreements leading to the joining of the territories between Ontario and the Pacific coast. Railways were not the only type of transportation route which received federal support for their development. Water routes as well were encouraged. Canal construction and the widening and deepening of river beds formed a part of the federal effort in this area.

Later in Canada's development air transportation received federal aid in the form of airfield construction, airport construction and the provision of detailed weather forecasts. Here the chief recipient has been Air Canada. Road transport has also been aided by the federal government. Even before the turn of the century—it is important to note this, Mr. Speaker—the federal government constructed roads in pioneer areas; for example, between Port Arthur and Fort Garry. According to Glazebrook:

After the gold discoveries in 1896 the Dominion Government undertook a program of road building in the Yukon Territory, and by 1913 there were some five hundred miles of good wagon roads radiating from Dawson and Whitehorse.

[Mr. Nesbitt.]

Since motor traffic had become more common before World War I, in 1919 the federal government passed the Canada Highways Act which authorized the expenditure of up to \$20 million on the construction and improvement of highways.

Between 1949 and 1968 the federal government allocated millions of dollars of federal funds for these purposes under the trans-Canada highway program. Together with the roads to resources program introduced by the Conservative government, but unfortunately abandoned by the subsequent Liberal government, these efforts constituted a wise and far-sighted attempt to improve Canada's transportation infrastructure.

The federal government has thus clearly recognized its responsibility to provide efficient transportation routes across Canada. But it has fallen behind in the scope of its efforts. As the Economic Council of Canada reported at page 40 of its sixth annual review published this year, public expenditures on transportation have grown somewhat more slowly than other major areas of government spending like health and education. The gap is felt particularly in the area of highway transportation. In the same report the Economic Council noted that the "intercity movement of both goods and passengers has been rising more rapidly than national output, with increasing shares of the total carried by automobiles, airlines and pipelines."

Of these three types of transport, automobile transport, including transport by trucks, is obviously the most flexible in the carrying of goods, and can be expected to increase its share of non-passenger traffic the most. Pipelines are restricted to carrying liquids, or solids which can be floated or suspended in a liquid. Because air transport costs so much, such carriage can generally be expected to be confined to the transport of goods which are extremely light, those which are so expensive that transport is a minor part of the final cost, and those which require great speed for their movement, such as mail or perishable goods.

In its report for the year 1967 the Economic Council of Canada noted the trend toward a great expansion of motor traffic. It said this at page 200:

Between 1945 and 1965, the rate of growth in the motor vehicle population of Canada was 7.9 per cent annually, more than twice the growth rate of the human population. After modifying the trend for such factors as low ownership ratios in 1945 and the explosion of demand after wartime restrictions, it appears that population growth and a declining ratio of persons to vehicles could lead