

Supply—Transport

impose taxes, we shall not be imposing hardship on those who need to fly, or enjoy flying, the type of aircraft which is here being penalized because it falls into a broad general category. If the minister would give some consideration to these four or five items I would be grateful, as I am sure the entire aviation industry would be.

Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert): It appears we are approaching the end of our discussion on this first item, but I should like to ask the minister a question before he replies. I should like to point out that there are some on this side who are foregoing their opportunity to speak; we know there will be a further chance for them to express their views when the main estimates for 1966-67 come up for consideration.

Before I ask this question I should like to point out that the minister has on two occasions failed to make an initial statement on the first item in the traditional way. I hope this will not become a pattern. If it did, I would regard it as a bad habit. Perhaps his failure to make a statement is one of the reasons why the debate has ranged so widely. Had he told us what had been accomplished in the department—supposing anything has been accomplished—and challenged us on one or two points we would have been obliged to reply and deal with what he had said and perhaps, as I say, we would not have ranged so wide in our comments.

I wish to inquire as to the whereabouts of three reports all of which are, I think, important. First, there is the Pilotage Commission report. I want to know what is happening to that and when we can anticipate legislation with respect to changes to be made in the Shipping Act. I want to know, too, how we are getting on with the report on the future of the air lines, and possible mergers—the Wheatcroft report. This is important because when we are examining the affairs of the C.P.R. we should know how much of the moneys of the C.P.R. are going into air services and being taken away from the rail passenger service. Last, I want to ask about an old favourite. Where is the interdepartmental study on the future of the merchant marine? This is important in days when we are moving bulk cargo all over the world and Canada is losing her position at the bargaining table.

This is what I am interested in. I hope the minister appreciates the sacrifices we are all making here. I think he has learned a good

[Mr. Forrestall.]

deal this week as far as answers are concerned.

Mr. Prittie: I am not prepared to make any sacrifices. I have already made my sacrifice, as has the minister, by listening to about 50 speeches on the estimates of this department.

Over the years there have been many suggestions made that the Department of Transport is far too big, dealing as it does not only with railway questions but with canals, telecommunications, broadcasting, harbours and so on. There have been suggestions that it should be broken up, or at least, that a department of civil aviation should be created under a minister of its own. I made this suggestion in 1963, and even then it was not an original one. The Air Transport Association has advanced this idea from time to time. I am sure the minister appreciates that if his department were dealing only with railway matters, for example, the estimates might already have been passed. I recall that the hon. gentleman said a couple of years ago that he felt big and able enough to handle this particular department. I am not so sure he believes this, now. He is certainly very capable but I think the size and complexity of the job have slowed him down.

If one thinks of the problems facing this country in the field on railway operations alone it becomes apparent there is a strong argument in favour of a separate department to handle these questions. I think the size of the department requires that it be split, at any rate, into two, in such a way as to recognize the importance of civil aviation in Canada. I was looking at the 1965-66 estimates and I noticed that the estimates of the air services branch alone are more than those of 12 departments of government; there are 12 departments, each in charge of ministers, whose budgets are smaller than that of the air services branch of the Department of Transport. They are the Departments of Agriculture, Citizenship and Immigration, Defence Production, Fisheries, Forestry, Industry, Justice, Mines, National Revenue, Northern Affairs, the Secretary of State and Trade and Commerce. All these departments have budgets smaller than one branch of the Department of Transport.

If the government does not see fit to establish a separate department I suggest they do as has been done in the Department of National Defence—appoint an associate minister and make him responsible for the conduct of part of the department. I realize that a