

**Mr. Jack Cullen (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I read with some interest, but frankly with very little surprise, the motion presented by the official opposition on this opposition day. One can almost see the Conservative caucus, presided over by the genial member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees), missing the magniloquent gentleman from Prince Albert. One can almost sympathize with the dilemma even of this body, because it seems there are so few subjects upon which its members can agree or even reach consensus.

That dilemma takes on insurmountable dimensions when they endeavour to come up with a subject they can speak about in a positive way, having found unanimity in their party. Here we have a motion which I think some Conservative genius has dreamed up for a party that cannot reach consensus in any positive policy direction, a party which finds itself ever more unable to reach consensus even when attacking the government.

This is quite a motion for debate. It allows each member of the opposition who takes the opportunity to speak, to highlight transportation problems as they affect his area. He can then go back to his riding and say in a political way, "I really told the government off." It would be my hope that the candidates who oppose those people in the next election will ask the obvious question, "After you told the government off, did you then proceed to tell the government how to remedy the situation?" Of course, the opposition party, being what it is, will duck that question as it so often does here, by saying that is not exactly its responsibility.

That is exactly the role the official opposition in the House of Commons is called upon to play and that is why I feel it is almost a waste of an opposition day, when the opposition had the opportunity to do something in a positive way, for the opposition to tell us what they think about a positive transportation policy. We have not heard much about that today.

**An hon. Member:** You won't listen.

**Mr. Cullen:** I did listen to the hon. member for Moncton (Mr. Thomas), who is not in his seat but is in the House. I give him credit for being one of the few members of the opposition who, when he moves a motion on an opposition day, sits in the House during the rest of the debate to listen to what other hon. members have to say. Normally the mover makes the motion, says what he has to say before the television cameras and we do not see him during the rest of the debate. The hon. member for Moncton has been courteous enough after moving the motion to listen to what the rest of us have to say. The important role which the opposition should play has been ignored.

When I prepared my notes for this speech I did not know whether I would speak midway in the debate or some time toward the end. I am satisfied that if anybody takes the time and effort to do a bit of research on the speeches made today by members of the opposition, he will find running throughout these speeches more parochial complaints than national ones, and I believe he will be hard pressed to find any positive direction in the debate even after sifting through the myriad criticisms.

**Mr. Benjamin:** You weren't listening.

### *National Transportation Policy*

**Mr. Cullen:** I was not only listening, I was listening quietly, which is something the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin) has a hard time doing when any debate is taking place in this House.

A national transportation policy is naturally a very difficult thing. By the same token, no one can deny the multiplicity of difficulties growing out of any attempt to resolve this dilemma. The Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) in speaking to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications on May 25, 1972, set out what he sees as our national transportation policy. In the time available to me I cannot repeat what he said at that time, but he made 17 or 18 suggestions about that which he is trying to do.

• (2130)

I commend the minister's speech of that date to anyone who wants to find out what we in this party are trying to do about a national transportation policy. The minister said that the structure of the ministry has been refined, that the new ports policy has been implemented, that the organization of the National Harbours Board has been updated, that the national policy council will play a key part in assisting policy formation, that most Canadian ports had their most successful year in history and that all ports responded well to the pressures caused by the United States longshoremen's strike. On and on it goes, all on the plus side of the picture. The minister did not duck anything. He came out with what he says is our national transportation policy. No one today volunteered to refer to the fact that the minister brought this forward. Naturally, in the half hour allotted to him he could not go through all three categories, land, sea and air, to the satisfaction of all the parties.

**An hon. Member:** He left the chamber.

**Mr. Cullen:** Yes, he left because like the wonderful minister he is, he has other duties and responsibilities to perform which he does beautifully. One of the problems we have in establishing a national transportation policy is the jealously guarded municipal and provincial jurisdiction, which means that a federal government in establishing a national policy must be prepared of necessity to deal with the provinces and with probably all the metropolitan areas which do not necessarily see eye to eye with their own provincial governments concerning the area in which priorities should be established. This is not to rule out the smaller rural and urban communities. But surely the provinces have the responsibility to deal with these communities and then to bring these ideas to a transportation policy conference.

A conference of this nature would have a tendency to get bogged down in political bickering, each one looking after his own community or particular responsibility. We would expect politicians to assume this role, and naturally they do. I am not too much in favour of in-camera meetings, but this is an area in which the country stands to gain tremendously if positive and compromising suggestions could be made by all levels of government and if all kinds of ideas could be brought about without the confrontation aspect that is bound to ensue under the glare of the mass media.