

Supply—Transport

statement. It would be helpful to have some of this information put upon the record in closer relationship to the items that we will be discussing as we go along.

Like many others, this is a department which asks for a considerable sum of money to be voted by parliament, and it is our duty before voting a sum of money approaching \$100 million to examine its estimates in detail. It is our task as we go along to scrutinize each estimate and to make sure, so far as we can be sure from the information we can obtain, whether or not the increases asked for are justified.

Nevertheless, Mr. Chairman, as the minister was making his statement, and indeed during the remarks of the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra, I could not help feeling that this department is a very good example of what government spending really is. Here we have not just a case of spending money for the sake of spending it, but rather a case of providing on a community or co-operative basis many important aids which individual persons or firms or companies could not provide for themselves. A very large portion of the money we are being asked to vote to be expended by the Department of Transport is for aids to travel by land, by sea and by air. There is also a fair amount of money for telecommunication services of one kind and another and another sum of money for meteorological services which are of benefit to the whole country in many ways.

There are those both in this house and outside it who at times like to prate about the glories and virtues of private enterprise, which is supposed to be able to stand on its own feet. But here we have a very good example of things which even that vaunted private enterprise which we have in this country cannot do for itself. There are things of the kind dealt with in these estimates which can be provided only by community or co-operative effort, and that is what we are doing in voting the money that pays for these various aids.

As one goes through the estimates of this department he cannot help recognizing what a valuable service is being performed, and I believe we all take a particular pride and interest in the work of the Department of Transport. It was interesting today to hear the number of new steps being taken, of the progress in connection with the ferry service from Yarmouth across to the New England coast, of the progress in connection with the construction of the causeway across the strait of Canso, of the progress of the St. Lawrence project, and the progress in connection with tunnels and bridges in various

parts of the country. This is a story of helping to develop our country, a story of the people doing it themselves through the instrument of government. But, as I say, Mr. Chairman, despite any satisfaction we may have over what this really means, as I have tried to spell it out just now, it is nevertheless our duty to examine these estimates closely as we go along to make sure no money is being asked which is not fully justified.

In view of the way we are handling these estimates it is necessary that any of us who have particular matters we want to draw to the attention of the minister do so at this time. There is one subject I have taken up with him repeatedly—and he would be the first to accept that word and underline it—which has not yet been solved. That is the problem of retired employees of the Canadian National Railways whose pension consists only of the basic \$25 a month. I believe I know the story fairly well. I know the origin of that basic pension and of the whole pension set-up of the Canadian National which provided for different kinds of plans. I know the story of what has happened in recent years, how the matter has been discussed on the floor of this house, in the committee on railways and shipping, owned, operated and controlled by the government, and so on. I know there have been discussions between the company and the men themselves at various levels, and that the whole question was discussed in particular by the pensions committee of the Canadian National Railways. I know, too, that a new set of rules has been promulgated recently which provide some potential improvement for those still in the service. They also provide improvements for some of those already retired, namely those on pensions that were at least in part contributory, in other words the men who have pensions of something more than \$25 a month. But nothing has yet been done for those already retired whose pension is only that basic amount of \$25. The number of retired employees of the Canadian National Railways in that category is something over 3,000.

For the last two or three years one of the answers given when we have brought forward the plight of these men has been the suggestion that something would be done for them if and when the means test were removed from the old age pension. That has been done, of course, and any of these men 70 years of age and over qualify for that pension regardless of what other means they may have. I submit, however, that this has not discharged the obligation of the final employers of these men to those who are on these small pensions. I used the phrase "final