

Supply—Transport

If, when they wanted to increase railway traffic, they had been satisfied with building isolated stations here and there, far apart, today you would not have all those famous railway systems and the people would not be inclined to benefit from railway transportation.

The same thing applies to air traffic. If you want people to wake up and create a strong potential for air traffic, the Department of Transport must provide at various places the facilities which will enable this traffic to grow.

The airport in Sherbrooke is waiting to be opened officially by the minister. We promise him a wonderful welcome. The hon. minister will be happy to see the joyous faces of the thousands of people who will come to express their thanks and gratitude, for there will be people not only from our district but from elsewhere. This would benefit not only Quebec but the whole country, as it would help to increase air traffic in our region and in the whole country.

[*English*]

● (12:30 p.m.)

Mr. Keays: A few days ago, Mr. Chairman, I was telling the Minister of Transport that I was going to endeavour to help him with his estimates. I believe at the time he misunderstood me, but I can assure him that the word I used was "help". I should like, in the few minutes I have at my disposal, to convey the minister on a tour of the Gaspé peninsula by means of the transportation facilities we have in that area. I know it is the lunch hour, but I am sure the minister would get a better sandwich back of the curtains than he would if he were to travel on the Canadian National system which we have in our area.

A region such as the Gaspé peninsula requires a transportation system that is efficient, regular and fast. The main concern must be that goods which are coming into the region and those that are going out must move at the cheapest rates possible. The economy of the peninsula is no longer one of fishing and lumbering only. Although the fishing industry is contributing substantially to our economy, there are fewer fishermen in the trade with a greater output as the result of technological and scientific advances in the trade.

Lumbering is also demanding fewer men, although the output is gradually increasing. There remains for us the tourist industry, the mining industry and manufacturing.

[Mr. Allard.]

The population of the area demands the right to be assured a way of life equal to that of people in other areas of Canada. Our geographical position, our distance from populated areas of the province which form the large consuming centres, puts us in a rather unfortunate position. This results in our citizens having to pay more for their purchases and receiving much less for the goods they sell. This situation, Mr. Chairman, of course also has the effect of creating a reluctance on the part of the industry to come to the area.

How can some of these inconveniences be overcome? I am sure that to attain that goal we must first of all create a favourable climate for industry to come to the area. Transportation is our greatest problem. As I have said, this is the result of our geographical position and our distance from large consuming centres.

Let us look at some of the transportation facilities which we have in the area now. I will take the south coast of the riding or of the peninsula, and there we have a railroad completed in 1915, running from Matapédia to Gaspé. The facilities there today are, naturally, a freight service and a local train running the 200 miles. The local train carries one passenger car of the vintage of 1915, still with wooden benches and a coal stove in the corner of the car. The other passenger facility is a Budd car running from Gaspé to Matapédia daily. You may, if you are lucky, get aboard that train. Many, many times I have seen that train when passengers were unable to get aboard for some 50 or 70 miles because of the lack of seating capacity. However, it is better than nothing, and we have to travel by that system. You may also buy a sandwich on that train, even if the train is four, six or eight hours late. I think the sandwich is made in Montreal, sent to Campbellton and possibly a week later put aboard that railway car.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I do not believe the citizens of that area are any different from those in any other area? They are not, and will not be considered, second class citizens. We expect to have a transportation system equal to that which links Halifax and Montreal, the distance being about the same. I will endeavour to tell you how we are treated once we get to the main line. If you are one of those who come, say, a distance of 75 miles from Gaspé to board the train, you naturally have your meal at noon. Then you come to Gaspé and leave there at 2.30 in the