

I have listened carefully to the hon. members who spoke this afternoon and perhaps they have a right to criticize some aspects of our current transportation system. Obviously mistakes are committed and things are not always perfect.

However, it seems that what has been done over the last five years in the area of sea, land or air transportation is not appreciated.

Obviously, some problems are still to be solved and some will always exist in such a big country as ours with a relatively small population. But to say, as the opposition did, that this government has developed no long-term transportation policy is, in my opinion, complete nonsense.

On May 25 last, the able Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) informed the Committee on Transport and Communications of his department's objectives as to the reorganization of our national ports through a new policy and as to assistance to small airports in isolated regions.

On December 10, 1971 the minister announced that the funds available to small airports would be trebled through a new assistance program.

Pilotage has been reorganized into four separate authorities thus giving greater autonomy to Canada's regions.

The Arctic Transport Agency which cooperates with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the construction of a second international airport for the Toronto area, the construction of the new Sainte-Scholastique airport which is due to open in 1975; these are some of the achievements of the present government.

Mr. Speaker, I have only mentioned a few objectives from amongst many. It is known that the Department of Transport's budget for the current fiscal year amounts to \$467 million, including \$82 millions in loans. It is an impressive budget with impressive aims.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to revert to the point I made a few moments ago, that is the assistance to smaller airports, for example. In my riding, which is quite large, there are some isolated and far-away communities which cannot be reached either by road or by rail. Air transport is the only available means in winter and sea transport in summer.

In co-operation with the Minister of Transport we have studied a project for the construction of major regional airports. In co-operation with senior officials of the Department, this project has been examined, and tenders having been invited, the work has begun on some of these regional airports which, I am sure, will provide at least during the winter months, adequate service to the people I am privileged to represent.

I would like also to point out, Mr. Speaker, that much has been achieved in the maritime field. Obviously, this is not fully appreciated, but in this field, harbour facilities have been improved; they have been updated through adequate loading and unloading facilities, particularly with regard to containers.

#### National Transportation Policy

• (2010)

This afternoon, I heard the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) say that the Department of Transport would have to expand considerably harbour facilities at Churchill. Of course, I have nothing against Churchill, but as I understand the remarks of the hon. member for Crowfoot, the federal government would have to expand the Churchill harbour facilities, at a cost of several million dollars.

We know—and the hon. member for Crowfoot should know it as well—that the port of Churchill can be used for only three months a year or so. Therefore, I do not see how the federal government could make that port better suited to navigation than it is at present, even by expanding existing facilities.

The hon. member for Crowfoot also mentioned the importance of seaports. I listened to him with great attention as he said that Vancouver harbour was the largest seaport in Canada. I would like to tell him that we also have some very important seaports in Eastern Canada. I would like to mention here the port of Sept-Îles in my constituency, which in 1970 was the most active in Canada as far as the tonnage of goods handled was concerned.

The hon. member for Moncton (Mr. Thomas) is cheering with good reason. Indeed, we had the opportunity to go on a trip to Sept-Îles together with the committee on transport and communications a few years ago, and the member thus had a chance to visit that important seaport. Following that trip, recommendations were made by the committee on transport and communications, and I am happy to say to this House that most of the recommendations of the committee, which was composed of members from all political parties, have been, if not implemented, at least accepted for implementation a few years from now.

In 1970, the port of Sept-Îles shipped 28,600,000 tons of iron ore, making it the busiest and most important port in Canada.

Obviously, much remains to be done, but I know the Minister of Transport will read the recommendations which have been made to him, especially those of the committee on transport and communications. He can study them and see to it that they lead to the construction of ports as important as those of the Pacific coast and eastern Canada, ports that are equipped with far more modern facilities.

Transport by railroad was also discussed. In the huge riding I have the honour of representing, neither the Canadian National, the Canadian Pacific nor any other railroad belonging directly or indirectly to the state, serves the people.

Still, we do have a railroad system which is unique in its way in that it is almost circular and runs over a distance of more than 600 miles from the St. Lawrence inland. I am thinking of a private railroad, which is kept by the mining companies that use it to transport iron ore. I say this because that railroad is isolated and it is not subsidized in any way by the government. However, there is heavy traffic and I know that the government gives assistance to those companies in connection with public security and