

Mr. MacNICOL: They were from gold mining companies in that country who are greatly worried about their inability to purchase bunker oil, which has placed them in a very dangerous position. Those who cannot obtain tractors to go many miles out to the sparsely wooded areas to get fuel find themselves in a difficult position. The minister knows that a number of tanks have been built at Yellowknife. Two companies that I know very well now have five tanks which are empty. I am wondering if under this bill the minister has sufficient powers—and I should like him to have all the powers required to do this—to arrange for some transport company to transport bunker oil in barrels by transport plane from Norman Wells to Yellowknife. On one occasion I myself flew over that country in a large transport plane which was capable of carrying twenty-eight passengers. Such a plane ought to be able to take care of a hundred barrels of fuel oil. A hundred barrels of fuel oil would contain 3,500 gallons, and would weigh approximately 35,000 pounds. There must be many transport planes available now that the war is over. If it could be arranged to use some of them to transport oil in 100-barrel lots from Norman Wells to those mining areas in Yellowknife, which are now doing the best they can to get into production, it would be good for the country. It would mean much business and employment and would save the companies from the danger of having their equipment frozen up, especially those who cannot get wood. Is it possible to obtain transport planes which could be sent into the country in an emergency to transport oil at the rate of a hundred barrels a flight? It would not take more than a matter of three or four hours to fly from Norman Wells to Yellowknife, so that even in the short days the plane would be able to make safely one trip a day. Could that be taken care of for the sake of opening up that country?

Mr. HOWE: The movement of bunker oil is hardly a matter for aeroplanes, because of the cost. The difficulty last season was that an unexpected demand developed during the latter part of the season. Water transportation was handicapped by low water and lack of craft. The result is that there was not as much bunker oil moved to Yellowknife as there should have been. However, next season the demand will be better understood. We shall be able to start at the beginning of the opening of navigation, and I think there will be no difficulty so far as the obtaining of sufficient oil is concerned.

[Mr. Howe.]

Mr. MacNICOL: It is this winter I am thinking of.

Mr. HOWE: My hon. friend is aware that a land airport has been built as Yellowknife which will be in use this winter. If need for transportation does develop, the nearest source of supply is Edmonton, and it will be possible to fly oil in from there to Yellowknife if it becomes necessary, although the cost of transportation is away out of proportion to the cost of fuel oil. Expensive items can stand air transportation, but fuel oil, being a cheap commodity, can hardly do so.

Mr. MacNICOL: The distance in each case is about the same. The distance from Edmonton to Yellowknife is approximately six hundred miles by air, and it is about the same distance the other way.

Mr. HOWE: About eight hundred the other way.

Mr. MacNICOL: From Edmonton to Yellowknife?

Mr. HOWE: No, from Norman Wells to Yellowknife.

Mr. MacNICOL: I did not think it was quite that far; but in any event the oil will be much cheaper at Norman Wells than at Edmonton. I do not think they would have bunker oil at Edmonton, but they have it at Norman Wells.

Mr. HOWE: That is right.

Mr. MacNICOL: I cannot help but feel that if there was an opportunity to send in bunker oil by plane at a subsidized rate of a hundred barrels per trip it would pretty soon overcome the difficulty. The minister knows that at Yellowknife they are up against a real difficulty. We cannot afford to have anything interfere with the expansion at Yellowknife. It is going to be one of the greatest gold mining areas in the world, if not the greatest.

Mr. HOWE: Every effort will be made by the Department of Transport or the air transport board to see that there is no interruption of operations at Yellowknife owing to lack of fuel oil.

Mr. STIRLING: There are in southern British Columbia at the present time a great many air-minded people who are concerned with the idea of service being given to those communities dotted along a little north of the boundary all the way between Lethbridge and Vancouver. Can the minister give us any information in regard to consideration having been given to assisting such developments? I believe at the present time three or four applications are before the board, and it may