

Alaska Highway

cially the people of the north, insist on having a large say on how resources shall be developed.

Let me tell the House a story which may illustrate my point. When I was a small child and the Japanese threatened to bomb Dutch Harbour in the Aleutians, there was panic in northern British Columbia. The people moved out of their homes and took to the mountains. We were ready for the worst. But, out of that terror something happened which had been thought impossible: within a short time the Alaska highway was built, the highway which everyone said was impossible to build. That shows you what can be accomplished. Madam Speaker, the Alaska highway is built. We must improve it, and improve the network of roads to the north.

Let me tell hon. members a story about the Stewart Cassiar highway, the highway leading to the far north. I often drive on that highway. Once, when I was needed in Ottawa, the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Guay) wondered what had taken me so long to come here. I explained that I had been caught between a mud slide and washout on the highway. Fortunately, I was able to get a small aircraft to land on a lake nearby. I boarded the aircraft and came back to Ottawa in time to please the Whip. That shows the adventure which can befall a member of parliament on that highway. We need small airstrips in the area. We need better tourist amenities along the highway to make it more attractive for tourists. But we are talking not only of tourists. We are talking about the utilization of Canadian ports.

At present it is economical to ship resources through the ports of Anchorage and Juneau. This situation could be altered successfully if there were transport access from the Alaska highway to the east and from the Stewart Cassiar highway to the south as well as a railway. Hopefully, access to a railway will transform the outlook for northern development.

One can say much about the area, much about its possibilities. The hon. member mentioned the coal in his constituency. If that coal were shipped through the port of Vancouver it would need to be hauled in a train pulled by ten locomotives, each of 3,000 horsepower. You could haul the coal to Vancouver, at great cost. But if the same coal were to be taken by rail to Prince Rupert, you would need only three locomotives, each of 3,000 horsepower to pull the train, and there would be a cost saving of one dollar per ton with regard to coal delivered at the port for trans-shipment to Japan. Such savings are worth-while. We must establish the infrastructure in the north which is necessary for development along the Alaska highway. I am glad the hon. member has drawn our attention to this aspect.

The Alaska highway itself has proved to be a boon. It has been greatly improved, and the improvements are continuing. Jurisdiction over the road was transferred from the Department of National Defence, which I forgot to mention as it is no longer in the picture, to the Department of Public Works has continued to improve facilities on the highway.

All of the mid-north, in which I include northern British Columbia, the northern parts of the prairie provinces, and even northern Ontario, although I smile when I hear people of northern Ontario calling themselves northerners

[Mrs. Campagnolo.]

as most northern Ontario lies south of most of the communities I represent—all of the mid-north of Canada above the 53rd parallel and below the 60th parallel deserves more attention than it is being given now. We need more communications in the area, even though there is a plethora of communications services. We have the CN-CP wire, the B.C.R. wire and the RCMP wire criss-crossing each other but not always helping the non-official people of the area to communicate with each other. These are problems we must consider.

Although I cannot agree with the hon. member's position, I am glad he brought to our attention a significant problem. We cannot deal with it in a committee of this House because it involves many jurisdictions. For instance, we need to consider the position of the Alaska state government and, in the long run, that of the United States government. For this reason there may be difficulty in connection with the hon. member's bill. But I congratulate him most sincerely for bringing this matter before the House so that he, and I, can remind the people of this country what is happening above the 53rd parallel.

[Translation]

Mr. Eymard Corbin (Madawaska-Victoria): Madam Speaker, evidently we are carrying on today consideration of Bill C-264 which, if I remember well, was discussed in the House in 1973. It is perhaps advisable to recall that the purpose of the bill is to provide for the development of the Alaska-Yukon Highway as a matter of national and international importance. The bill provides that a non-Crown corporation may be established to take over the development of that highway in Canada. The bill is aimed at providing a national character to the organization taking into account the regional, federal and provincial as well as international interests, to the extent that the United States are responsible for the development of part of the highway and that American representatives are appointed as associated members of the administrative board of the authority.

I will not deal, Madam Speaker, with the appointment of some present or future members of Parliament as members of the authority as suggested by the mover of the bill, but I would say however that such a proposal seems to me at first rather unusual under our parliamentary traditions and practices, whatever may be done in other jurisdictions. Still I might add that the sponsor of the bill seems to have devoted much time to its preparation and that I do not question at all his sincerity, his objectivity and his good intentions. For all that I do not think I am an expert in these questions, and I should be interested in the progress of the bill, if it does pass this stage today. I do feel that the final product will be quite different from the text now before us once the bill has passed through the usual parliamentary sieve.

I hope the sponsor of the bill and his colleagues will forgive me if I refer to the few remarks made in this House by the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs, who has come back to his first designation, namely the hon. member for Laprairie (Mr. Watson). As I said, I am not so much concerned with the specific value of the bill. I simply say that if the hon. members representing that area of the province attach enormous importance to it, I give them full marks because