

National Transportation Policy

referred. If people could do the same kind of work outside a metropolitan area, and if transportation difficulties were minimal, they would hesitate before moving into the big cities. It might be that a change in our thinking with regard to overland transportation would bring about a halt in this movement toward larger and larger cities with all the problems that arise from them.

• (1630)

The hon. gentleman spoke about France and its wonderful transportation system. There is no reason why our railways could not provide a good transportation service in metropolitan areas as a substitute for automotive traffic—the great headache. The hon. member of the NDP will realize that the reason people use a car is that they are willing to pay for the extra square footage they receive and for the comfort. If you provide a substitute system you must also provide the same comfort. It is not enough to say that during the rush hour people must hang on to a strap because trains are crowded. This is why people prefer to take their own car. However, if you tell people that they can have a compartment, then they will pay for it.

Mr. Benjamin: You want to crowd the roads instead.

Mr. Otto: The hon. member opposite who made that remark said that this would not be fair, that people want equality. In other words, they all want to be crowded. We must discover why it is that people travel by car. Then we should introduce a new railway system, be it a monorail system or some other type. We should give the railways increased rates or whatever it is, but they should then be obligated to provide a service that the people will use. This means research must be done. They cannot finance this research out of their present earnings because they do not have any. The railways did introduce a new turbo-train running between Montreal and Toronto; they lost a little money, it did not work perfectly and so they forgot about it. Within the structure of the transport department there are facilities and money for research. We should emphasize to the railways that we will give them the money that is required to introduce a more efficient system.

In conclusion, since my time is almost up, may I say that if the motion had been phrased in this way, that the Canadian people should consider a new role for the railways, then it would have been acceptable to me. But I do not think you can blame the government for having the same type of vision that all Canadians have, and I include the hon. member.

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak to this motion, may I briefly refer to the first part of it, which reads:

This House regrets that the government has failed to develop the National Transportation Policy pursuant to section 3—

Section 3 of the act provides:

It is hereby declared that an economic, efficient and adequate transportation system making the best use of all available modes of transportation—

—be established. That act was passed in 1967 but the government has done very little to provide the leadership

[Mr. Otto.]

necessary for an adequate transportation system in all parts of Canada that makes the best use of all modes of transportation. This is what I will attempt to prove in the 15 minutes available to me, which is a very short space of time.

Mr. Otto: The act also says an “economic” transportation system.

Mr. Horner: An economic, efficient and adequate system to serve the people of Canada. We have a population of 22 million stretched across the country a distance of 4,500 miles. This is why we need an adequate system. An economic and efficient system might mean one rail line running between Montreal and Toronto. Such a line would be economic and it would be efficient, but would it be adequate for a country the breadth of ours? No, it would not, and this is the point I want to make.

What has been done to develop the port of Churchill? Certainly, not very much, yet much grain could be moved out of that port. A lot of grain out of what might be called the central prairies could be moved through the port of Churchill at about 11 cents a bushel saving to the prairie farmers. This year the price received by the farmer for his wheat has been the lowest in the last ten years. In 1969 wheat tonnage going through the port of Churchill amounted to 656,000. In 1970, it amounted to 738,000 tons and in 1971 it was down to 617,000 tons, in round figures. Has the government been encouraging importation of goods through that port? Not very much! Has the government established larger warehousing facilities at the port of Churchill to handle other produce coming into that port for what might be called the central prairies? No, it has not.

Mr. Otto: What about Vancouver?

Mr. Horner: I will come to Vancouver in a moment. Has the government established a longer insurance period for grain moving out of and through the Hudson Strait? No, it has not. The government did encourage some international insurers to take a look at the port, but nothing came of it. The government has not provided any leadership to develop this port.

Much has been said about modes of transportation, yet section 3 of the act has not even been implemented. That section refers to the trucking industry, and whether that industry can compete favourably with the railways on the prairies. Under section 3 of the act, regulation of all modes of transportation will not be of such a nature as to restrict the ability of any mode of transport to compete freely with any other mode. We all know that under the Motor Vehicle Transport Act, which was passed in this House in 1954, there are all kinds of restrictions on trucking companies in the provinces that inhibit them from competing favourably with the railways. Some interesting figures have come to light recently regarding feed grain assistance given the trucking industry in the province of Quebec.

I have before me the Canadian Livestock Feed Board annual report, in which table 15 clearly outlines that from Thunder Bay to Chicoutimi the rate for rail transportation of feed grain was 92 cents per hundredweight in 1967. Since feed grain assistance was given to trucking firms,