

New look for Canadian transportation

Documents on a new transportation policy have been tabled in the House of Commons by the Minister of Transport, Jean Marchand.

Among the proposals, responsibility for the national transportation system will be moved from the Canadian Transport Commission to the Minister of Transport; the Federal Government and industry will construct and operate the first Arctic Class ice-breaker cargo ship at a cost of \$35 million; a major expansion for ports will be sought; and, as a forerunner to the Government's aim of creating an improved integrated passenger transportation system, a \$28-million high-speed demonstration railway service between Quebec City and Windsor, Ontario, will be developed. The Government has approved an intensified effort to upgrade rail passenger services across Canada through joint use of Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railways.

Freight rates

The Minister put forward, as a basis for discussion with provincial governments, carriers and shippers, measures relating to railway freight rates which, he said, was intended to ensure that the railways could obtain a sufficient cash flow to improve their commercial "viability", and at the same time ensure that the freight-rate structure was as equitable as possible, both regionally and to shippers.

The Minister indicated his willingness to investigate, in co-operation with those affected, the possibility of reducing the difference between the legal minimum and maximum rates; establishing a new basis for the freight-rate structure, including the possibility of basing freight rates on a combination of variable and fixed costs, rather than on long-run variable costs alone.

Mr. Marchand also indicated his intention to ensure that rates are fair, by applying the provisions of the Cost Disclosure Act when necessary, and by proceeding at an appropriate time with a more comprehensive Information Act.

Access to remote areas

The Government also intends to work with provincial governments to improve

and develop remote areas of Canada.

The policy will assist those communities that are without acceptable year-round surface access. Improvements could take the form of infrastructure or subsidized transportation services, and would be designed to use methods best suited to the needs of the areas concerned. Cost-effectiveness would be the principal criterion.

Decisions as to improvements would be made by the federal and provincial governments.

Transfer of authority

Speaking of the change of authority from the Transport Commission to the Government, Mr. Marchand said that it was the Government's intention to make a number of changes that would be designed to "make it clear that a regulatory function is essential for the proper management of Canadian transportation and that the Canadian Transport Commission should continue in this role, although with less emphasis on legal procedures and more on administrative simplicity; ensure that the Minister of Transport is the principal source of transportation policy advice, with the National Transportation Act being amended accordingly; and give the Minister of Transport a clear and accepted means of giving policy direction to the Canadian Transport Commission, but not in the context of any specific case before the Commission".

Ice-breaker carrier

The Arctic Class ice-breaker cargo ship, capable of working three to five months a year in the Arctic, will be used to develop Canadian technical and commercial expertise required in moving minerals, oil and gas from the Arctic, and could be the first of as many as ten such ships during the next decade. Commercial demand for this type of vessel could provide significant benefits to the Canadian shipping and shipbuilding industry. Construction of the 28,000 deadweight-ton vessel is expected to begin this summer for service in the 1977/78 season.

Mines in the Eastern Arctic have already been identified as having from \$2.5 and \$3 billion in minerals and it will be ships such as these that will provide the most economical method of transportation.

Seaweed specialties from the province of New Brunswick

With the opening of a new seaweed processing plant and live-storage facility owned by Atlantic Mariculture Limited at Castalia, Grand Manan, New Brunswick is now in the forefront of technical development in the international seaweed-foods industry, which is worth over \$250 million a year to world producers.

The new facility, opened by the province's Fisheries Minister, Omer Leger, on June 9, is the result of an ongoing provincial program of government and industry co-operation directed towards the introduction and improvement of harvesting, processing and marketing methods of New Brunswick's marine resources.

Dulse has been harvested and eaten in New Brunswick for many years. Atlantic Mariculture is developing the industry, diversifying the range of specialty seaweed-food products from the province and introducing advanced technology.

The company, which will provide high-quality dulse to traditional markets, will also offer a wide range of sea spices and seaweed foods for export, as well as condiments, feed additives, fertilizers and other products from various species of marine algae, which are abundant in the Fundy Bay area.

Stratford director to Film Board

Montreal actor and director Jean Gascon has been appointed to the National Film Board for a term of three years. He replaces Jean-Louis Roux, also of Montreal.

Mr. Gascon won a scholarship in 1946 from the French Government to study at various schools in France, including l'École du Vieux-Colombier. In 1949, after appearing in many professional productions in Paris and on tour, he returned to Canada and, with Jean-Louis Roux and Guy Hoffman, formed Le Théâtre du Nouveau Monde. He directed and acted in some 50 productions with this company, and was also a director at Stratford in 1959.

Mr. Gascon, who was a co-founder of the National Theatre School in 1960, subsequently became its general direc-