

Supply—Transport

Mr. Hopkins: Mr. Chairman, during the last few days we have listened to speeches from various members of the house who have taken the opportunity to tell other members of the house and the Minister of Transport in particular about their problems back home. It will therefore be no great innovation in Canadian politics if to a large extent I do likewise on behalf of Renfrew North in particular and the Ottawa Valley in general.

I have stated in a previous speech that the Ottawa Valley has not prospered during the past several years to the same extent as have other areas in Canada. In fact, the upper Ottawa Valley has received so little attention that incentives for growth from either level of government have been next to non-existent. Other people who lived in an area where road accessibility leaves much to be desired, where railway freight rates show no mercy and where regular air passenger transportation is nil, would throw up their hands in hopeless disgust, particularly when they see other parts of Canada witnessing a boom, but while the Ottawa Valley people have been and are now witnessing these situations, they are not by any stretch of the imagination giving up hope. In fact, there is a new spirit abroad in the area. The people have never been afraid of work. They are not afraid of work today nor are they afraid to meet great challenges. All I ask on their behalf is that they be given a fair fighting chance to improve and to promote the growth of their communities.

Give us equalized freight rates and encourage the provincial government of Ontario to improve trans-Canada highway 17 by offering a federal grant toward such a project. Because this route is designated a trans-Canada highway this government has both a moral and a national responsibility to assist in its upkeep, and the provinces concerned not only have the power but also the direct responsibility to co-operate in maintaining those sections of the nation's trans-Canada highway that run through their individual provinces. The people of the Ottawa Valley would be grateful if the Minister of Transport would promote such action.

We have running through our geographic area a river which is one of the largest on the North American continent. Ever since the settlers moved into the upper Ottawa region during the days of the Crimean war to cut timber for the British navy, this river has been used for logging purposes. The Ottawa river and its tributaries such as the

[The Chairman.]

Petawawa river have become the graveyard for countless numbers of good logs. Not only has this been a waste of good timber but it has also made these waters a danger zone for boats and swimmers.

A plan must be introduced to promote the cleaning up of these waterways because the Ottawa and its tributaries are becoming more and more important as tourist areas and the local boat traffic is increasing rapidly. Man has received the beauty of nature free of charge. Let us not destroy it at such a high cost.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, two railways run through the Ottawa Valley. Over the years since these railways were built historians have lamented about the lack of business that these lines receive from the Canadian shield. One of our eminent Canadian historians, Professor A.R.M. Lower, whom I am pleased to say I have known personally, describes the geographic area from ten miles north of Pembroke to Winnipeg as a rather barren one so far as rail business is concerned.

A few days ago a group of Liberal members of parliament from these areas met to discuss what they feel is a common problem. Business can be promoted in these areas and attracted to them if we are given equalized freight rates. I know that the other hon. members of the house are quite capable of putting forth ideas on behalf of their own constituencies in northern Ontario. However, I mention this to show that the urgency of this recommendation has considerable support. Even those people who have an elementary knowledge of Canadian history realize that the transcontinental railways were built in Canada not only to weld this nation together, not only for military purposes to maintain law and order on new frontiers, not only to entice geographic areas such as British Columbia to join confederation, but also for the purpose of improving national trade and for the purpose of providing easier access to international markets. Today we have very rapidly growing areas in Canada and we have stagnating areas in Canada. Let us not lose sight of the imagination, of the hopes and of the plans and initiative of generations of people who have contributed greatly to the building and development of our country.

• (3:40 p.m.)

The pioneers of this nation, our ancestors, have provided us with certain tools to continue the job of developing and promoting a