

Supply—Transport

consideration in preparing future legislation or policy in respect of the two national railways.

An hon. member has stated in this committee that nothing has been done to help the maritime provinces in the problems they face regarding freight rates. I should like to say that I am looking forward to the receipt of the second volume of the MacPherson report, which will undoubtedly contain further recommendations to which the government will give consideration. As the old saying goes, Rome was not built in a day, nor will the problem of equalizing freight rates be solved in a day. This is a very difficult problem, particularly with reference to the maritime provinces; but I am sure this government, after considering the recommendations made by the MacPherson royal commission, will be able to suggest possible solutions to the problems facing these areas.

There are several other matters to which I intend to refer, but I shall do so during the consideration of individual items. I should like at this time, however, to refer to one other matter of great importance to the residents of Pictou island, which lies approximately seven miles off the coast of Nova Scotia. The only means of communication between this island and the mainland during winter is provided by an airplane which flies between the island and Prince Edward Island. This airplane is capable of carrying the mail and one passenger, and was formerly operated by a gentleman locally referred to as "the flying farmer". At the end of last winter that gentleman ceased to provide this service, and was replaced by a gentleman known as "the flying padre". The air strip which exists on the island is not a good one, and does not lend itself to easy landings and take offs especially during winter months. In order to facilitate this service on a year round basis a new and better air strip is required.

I drew this need to the attention of both the present minister and his predecessor, and was advised that the necessary land must be purchased by the province or municipality and donated for this purpose before the Department of Transport could do anything in this regard. I was also advised that there must be a local guarantee to maintain the air strip, once it had been built. Following the receipt of this advice, officials from the Moncton division of the department made a trip to the area and have since suggested that there are strips there which could be utilized.

I brought the situation to the attention of the government of the province of Nova Scotia, and was informed that it was more of a municipal problem. Since that time I have approached a municipal councillor who

will undoubtedly put the problem before the county council, and I hope it will come forward with a solution. I am sure the necessary land in the area can be purchased for a very low price, and that maintenance would amount to very little as compared to the importance of maintaining communications between that island and the mainland especially during the winter months.

That is all I wish to say at this time, Mr. Chairman, but I feel I should repeat that the services provided by this department are very important to the residents of my constituency, and commend the minister for his co-operation to date in this regard.

Mr. Winch: Mr. Chairman, I understand that during the discussion on this vote hon. members are entitled to raise matters concerning transportation in Canada both in a general and a particular way. As this government has not yet seen fit to face up to the necessity and inevitability of providing a national transportation policy, it automatically follows that what I have to say deals with transportation in particular. Transportation is of tremendous importance to the Canadian people and Canada's economy, and I hope the minister, with his vast knowledge, will honestly and openly give this committee information regarding exactly what is happening in the transportation field in Canada.

I wish to particularize with reference to three points. The first deals with the passenger service which is now being provided by the Canadian National Railways and the Canadian Pacific Railway. I have been very interested during the past two weeks in press releases issued by the officials of both railway transportation systems. I have also been interested in the passenger service being provided by these railway systems, and the endeavours to encourage the officials of the two systems to make an effort to meet the needs of Canadian people for passenger service.

I must regretfully say that while I have been interested in these press reports issued by both the Canadian National Railways and the Canadian Pacific Railway in regard to passenger service, I have had to come to the conclusion that it is just so much eyewash. I suggest that actually the officials of the two railway systems are doing everything possible to discourage the provision of the passenger service part of their operations. I believe we are entitled to learn from the Minister of Transport just what is going on behind the scenes and what is the passenger transport policy of the national railroads of Canada.

Let me give an indication of why I have come to this conclusion. I should like to give the minister a few examples and ask him to