

CNR and Air Canada

bring in a national transportation policy that equalizes all freight rates across Canada, thus alleviating the disproportionate rates paid by western farmers. I call on the government to make public its transportation policies which have been kept hidden in the office of the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang). Why has this report not been tabled in the House of Commons for the scrutiny not just of members of the House of Commons but of people in my constituency who will be affected by government policies in the future? They want to know where they stand. I believe it is the responsibility of this government to outline that program.

• (2120)

Is this report to suggest a reduction in delivery points in the Prairies? Is there to be some mention of rail line abandonment in this report which is in the minister's office? Further, will we see this report and be able to judge it before the next election? I have grave doubts about that.

Any new national transportation policy should be given jurisdiction over Canadian harbours. I point out that in the 1972-73 estimates the amount of money allocated for harbour improvement is down over the previous year. Yet we have seen a backlog of grain and grain-carrying ships at Vancouver as well as difficulties in respect of transportation. This is not the year for any government to be involved in the cutting back of expenditures for the development of facilities at Canadian harbours. I suggest this happens because the government does not draw up a national transportation policy for all of Canada.

There are other matters which could be discussed in terms of an improved transportation policy. It is time we developed a transportation policy based upon service and not profit. It is time the CPR was nationalized and made a public utility which would involve itself in service to the Canadian people. It is time the government ensured that the port of Churchill is put to full use. We in Saskatchewan and in the prairie west have for years heard the Hudson Bay route association representatives shouting for proper use of the port of Churchill, yet there has been no emphasis on this particular aspect of transportation by the government.

The hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) pointed out in the House a few days ago that there is a government terminal in the city of Prince Rupert. He also pointed out that the harbour there is one of the finest on the west coast. It is time the government re-examined its policy on grain transportation and looked into the possibility of the use of that terminal. It is interesting to note that when the hon. member for Essex (Mr. Whelan) spoke in the House on this matter he pointed out to the government that the agricultural committee started seven years ago to press for the need to improve port facilities. However, the government in its policy has not seen fit to give emphasis to the requirements in this regard. The hon. member for Essex is quite well known for his habit of pointing out the lack of consistency or lack of good policies by this government. I do not understand how he can still stand and vote along with them when the crunch comes.

[Mr. Knight.]

I have taken up a considerable amount of time in respect of transportation related to railway and harbour facilities in Canada as well as the real need to equalize freight rate costs and the real need to give Canadians the opportunity to travel within their own country at costs which are less or at least equal to the costs involved in travelling to Europe. There are other parts of this bill which deal with the expenditure of money in respect of Air Canada. When this government came into power it suggested there would be an end to regional disparities. This sounded quite good to the people of the country. However, we have seen no proof of this. I wish to note in respect of spending on air facilities that there is to be an expenditure of 60 cents per capita for airport facilities in Saskatchewan, in comparison with an expenditure of \$3.20 per capita in Ontario. Including the grant of \$42,766,000 which is to be made for the building of a new airport in the area of Toronto, we would have a per capita expenditure of \$10.05, compared to 60 cents in Saskatchewan.

As pointed out so adequately last week in Saskatoon by the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave), it is high time the airport at Saskatoon was improved and the air facilities in Regina improved in order to meet the needs of the people of Saskatchewan. I have pointed out these things to the government in the hope that the Minister of Transport will come to grips with the problems of transportation in Canada. Earlier in the House I asked him about the possibility of Prairie representation on the port of Vancouver authority. At that time he said no to the suggestion. I repeat that I believe there is need for a new national transportation policy in which the prairie region would have the privilege, if you wish to call it that, of having representation on the port of Vancouver authority to look over and examine the policy and how our grain is handled at this west coast port.

In the short time I have been on this earth I have on many occasions travelled on passenger trains. On those occasions I felt that the service was relatively good. I often wondered, however, whether with a little imagination the railway companies in this country could develop a passenger service which would be attractive to Canadians who wish to travel from one end of the country to the other. When one travels from the east coast to the Rockies one can see an immense amount of beauty, and if one were to travel on the railway one could do so without the inconvenience of having to drive on our highways. I believe that with a considerable amount of imagination in the area of passenger service the railways could provide the type of service which would bring about increased use of our railways by people who travel in Canada.

I thank members of the House of Commons for their kind attention. I hope the government will support the amendment moved by the hon. member for Battleford-Kindersley (Mr. Thomson), which would give the government the opportunity to draw up a truly national transportation policy to meet the needs of the Canadian people.

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): Mr. Speaker, I do not pretend to be a great expert on our transportation system, but I should like to deal with one particular aspect pertaining to western Canada, my riding and all prairie ridings. I refer to the grain transportation situation. This problem has been accentuated this year because of the heavier