

vided immeasurable assistance in highway construction. By these means it has sought to make the trucking industry a strong competitor to the railways. Up to this date, however, the volume of freight handled by trucks and other modes of transportation has not been sufficient to force the CNR, the main rail facility in the Atlantic provinces, to maintain a competitive low-rate structure, particularly as applied to most bulky inward-bound production imports and bulky outward-bound manufactured or agricultural products.

Although the government has tried, it has not achieved the intent of the National Transportation Act and must therefore undertake new initiatives if this goal is to be reached. The initiatives announced today by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) certainly fall a long way short of those which are required. He gave the shippers of Atlantic Canada to understand that he was completely tied up with air policy and not in the least concerned about freight rates in my part of Canada. It is a sad state of affairs that a minister who comes from Atlantic Canada and who should know, if anyone does, just how serious is the transportation situation in all sectors of the economy, should leave such an impression. We are, as of today, without a transportation policy in Atlantic Canada as a result of what the minister has said. That is the measure of the weakness of the statement the minister made.

Since the minister is so involved with air policy I should like to make a few comments on that aspect. They relate to a matter which irritates me no end. I have noted with concern that a Canadian has no difficulty at all in getting a flight out of Canada to almost any destination, at a very cheap rate. As I was flying recently, I took copies of the international Air Canada schedule and the national Air Canada schedule and compared some of the rates which are being charged for air travel. You can fly from Halifax to London for \$106 less than you can fly from St. John's to Vancouver. A 45-day excursion between Vancouver and London costs \$334, whereas one from Vancouver to Halifax costs \$358. In other words, you can fly from Vancouver to London for \$24 less than you can fly from Vancouver to Halifax.

• (2110)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. I regret having to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him has expired.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, we are discussing this evening a motion presented by the official opposition criticizing the government for its failure to develop a national transportation policy. I am in support of the motion because the government has no transportation policy. As I listened to the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Cafik), who spoke a short while ago and went into some detail about the ideas that he submitted to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) some two years ago regarding the need to encourage urban commuter transportation, I wondered how he could support a government that had completely failed even to commence to develop a national transportation policy.

The government's policy has been one of default, one of drift. Let us just examine what is happening. The Minister

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of the Environment (Mr. Davis) is in Sweden making great speeches about the need to do something to stop pollution. We in Canada are encouraging competition between trucks and railroads, though there is no question that trucks are unable to move large amounts of freight without polluting the atmosphere. We encourage this pollution by subsidizing the building of superhighways while requiring the railways to build and maintain their own rights of way. We discourage use of the railways by raising the price of passenger tickets while encouraging people to travel by car on superhighways on which they have not paid anything to ride.

One of the best means of transportation is provided by the railroads, yet we are destroying it. The Ottawa to Montreal run is a distance of 120 miles which the railways covered in two hours. When I came to Parliament ten years ago there were between five and eight trains a day. We have now raised the rates so much, discontinued dining car service—in fact, we provide no meals service—and cut down on the number of trains a day to the point that people no longer use the trains on this route. Instead there is a bus service every hour. There are already many cars using this road and the province of Quebec has had to build a superhighway on its side of the border. The province of Ontario is now building its superhighway to link with the Quebec highway.

The Minister of Transport is not satisfied with having virtually wiped out railway passenger routes; he is now spending \$200 million to encourage travel by STOL aircraft. What madness is this? One can go from the centre of Ottawa to the centre of Montreal by train in two hours. As I say, we are now going to spend \$200 million so we can fly from somewhere in Ottawa to somewhere in Montreal in 48 minutes. That, Mr. Speaker, is the kind of transportation policy that the government has.

Sufficient hon. members from the Atlantic provinces and the Prairies have already spoken about the inequities of freight rates that I do not need to put on the record what the situation is. The hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Murta) gave some illustrations of the difference in cost of moving freight and how it is cheaper to move freight from Montreal to Vancouver than it is from Winnipeg to Vancouver. This is because there is an alternative route: one can ship freight by boat from Montreal to Vancouver via the Panama Canal. This means the railways have to lower rates to compete between Montreal and Vancouver, while this is not the case from Winnipeg.

I should like to discuss for a moment a subject with which the minister dealt this afternoon and about which I interrupted him, somewhat facetiously though not entirely. I do not have the text of what he said, but I am sure I am not misrepresenting him when I say he said that the government's transportation policy was based on the National Transportation Act and that the workings of that policy and the decisions arising out of the act stemmed from the Canadian Transport Commission. He went on to say that those who did not agree with the decisions made by the Canadian Transport Commission had the right of appeal.

I then interrupted him, as I say somewhat facetiously, to say that I thought this was pretty useless since the chairman of the commission was the friend of the minister. The