

Supply—Transport

marine areas which surround the maritime provinces and in which I, of course, am particularly interested. I am not going to recapitulate the history of ferries, of which I know the minister must be heartily weary. In fact we are all in full sympathy with the minister for having come into the department at this time and to inherit the derelict messes for which he is now responsible. I wonder how he can smile. I wonder how he keeps his good looks. I wonder why his hair has not turned snow white.

Mr. Marler: I am smiling at the strong words of my hon. friend.

Mr. Nowlan: The strong words I may use are only those words which I am permitted to use under the rules of the house. If I could use the language which is used outside the house it would be much stronger than anything even the genial chairman now presiding would permit me to use.

I shall deal for a moment with the ferry *Bluenose*. I am sure we are all familiar with the past history of that almost ancient institution, the keel of which was promised in 1949, which we were told would be in operation in 1951 and which last July the minister told us would be operating very shortly.

At that time he was having trouble with worm gears, and he continued to have trouble with worm gears during July, August, September, October, November and December. Then he was faced with the dire possibility, in fact the probability, that the *Bluenose* would be frozen in the St. Lawrence and a roar would go up from the maritimes the like of which had never been heard before. Some of you who have read history know the story of the escape of the *Tallahassee*, that confederate cruiser which came into Halifax harbour during the civil war, sneaked out the eastern passage with federal gunboats waiting for her and made good her escape. The escape of the *Bluenose* from Lauzon and down the St. Lawrence river is comparable only to the escape of the *Tallahassee*, let me tell you. However, the *Bluenose* escaped and she got down into the deep water of the Atlantic at least.

Mr. Marler: Is the hon. member likening himself to a gunboat?

Mr. Nowlan: Likening myself or the *Bluenose*? At any rate, then there was a question whether or not she would go into operation. I say quite seriously, Mr. Chairman, that it would almost appear as if the department and the minister did not have the intention of operating the boat last fall or this winter. There was a great deal of public opinion stirred up about it, and finally the boat went into operation at the end of the year.

When it did, suitable passenger accommodation had not been provided at Yarmouth, and there was another case which would indicate that, despite the long chapter of delays, despite the fact that seven years had elapsed since the boat was first proposed, there was no intention of putting it into operation at least until next spring because the Minister of Public Works was somewhat humiliated by having to construct hasty shelters, build wooden walks over the mud and do a whole lot of other things so people could get on and off the pier and on and off the boat.

At any rate the boat finally got into operation. Speaking of the poor accommodation, Mr. Chairman, I should like to say that back in 1952 the predecessor of the present Minister of Transport said at page 2282 of *Hansard* that his colleague the Minister of Public Works was purchasing that year—that was 1952—the land for the erection of the terminal piers and facilities at Yarmouth, that progress was being made during that year, and that they would be completed long in advance of the time the boat would be ready for operation. Of course it did not require a great deal of prophetic vision to say they would be ready before the boat was ready for operation, but unfortunately the prophet in that case fell down as he did in so many other cases.

As I said, the boat got into operation, and then this sad and sorry story starts all over again. You know, Mr. Chairman, as far as the story of the *Bluenose* is concerned, those of us who are older will remember going to the movies many years ago and seeing the Saturday night thrillers. There was always one chapter each night and then the thriller was postponed until the next Saturday night with the heroine facing disaster and the public left in a great deal of consternation and wonder as to what was going to happen.

The story of the *Bluenose* is exactly like those old thrillers. Something happens from one day to another to keep the public in suspense as to what is going to happen next. The boat was in operation for a little while. Then there was a report that she had suffered damage to perhaps one propeller. Then the boat was continued in operation. Then there were reports that she had suffered damage to perhaps the other propeller. She still limped on, back and forth, between Yarmouth and Bar Harbor. Then finally a couple of weeks ago it was announced that she would be taken off and sent to Saint John dry dock for repairs.

She went into dry dock for repairs. Then last Tuesday—Tuesday of this week—in reply to a question from me, the minister stated that the repairs to the *Bluenose* had been completed the preceding day and that he