

the constant concern of the government led by the Right Honourable Mr. Trudeau. We are pleased to hear that the Throne Speech gives promise that the welfare of our people is again very much the concern of the government. I am especially pleased to note that the status and rights of women will be given more consideration in the future.

Honourable senators, I should like at this time to tell you something about Prince Edward Island, and its transportation problems. It will be remembered that by the terms of Prince Edward Island's entry into Confederation in 1873, the province was promised continuous means of transportation to and communication with the mainland. In fact, the provision of continual service is a Constitutional obligation. I shall give you a short history of our communication and transportation service, leading up to the present.

● (1620)

Until the establishment of the railway car ferry service in 1916 the iceboats service provided the most reliable, and sometimes the only, means of winter communication between Prince Edward Island and the mainland, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. In the earliest days of our history, travel by birch bark canoe in winter through icebound conditions was the only method of travel. That was a hardship beyond our imagination today.

In 1827 the iceboats came into use during the winter months. These iceboats were simply row-boats with steel runners. They were hauled by men who had harness strapped around them. When they encountered open water they took to the oars. Travel by this means was often most difficult. Later came the ice-breaking steamers, but even then there were times when the ice boats had to be brought back into service because the ice-breaking vessels could not navigate through heavy ice in the Strait of Northumberland.

I should like to recall the names of the ice-breaking steamers which followed the ice boats. First came *The Albert*, a wooden ice-breaking ship built in 1874. Then came *The Northern Light*, followed by *The Neptune*, *The Landsdown*, *The Petrel*, and *The Stanley*, the first steel ship built by the dominion government in 1888. *The Minto*, which was more powerful than *The Stanley*, was built in 1899. *The Earl Grey* was built in 1912, I believe.

*The Prince Edward Island*, more powerful still, was built in 1915 to work along with *The Stanley*, *The Minto* and *The Earl Grey*. In 1931, a new ship, *The Charlottetown*, was built at Lauzon. She was the most powerful ice-breaker in the world at that time, but she was lost off the coast of Nova Scotia during the war in 1941. The *Abegweit*, a ship rated at 15,000 horsepower, came next. She is still in service, and was our only rail car ferry until recently.

The story of these ships fighting the ice fields and ice packs of the Northumberland Strait, being caught in the ice for hours and sometimes days, is long and heroic. It took men of iron nerve to combat such conditions.

From the province of Prince Edward Island—sometimes called "Canada's front lawn"—we export such products as potatoes, turnips, fish and some fruits in season, all of which must reach their markets without delay. These products are perishable, and cannot be kept for long peri-

ods as is the case with wheat and other grains which can be stored in granaries.

Honourable senators, I should like to tell you something about the tourist industry in the Atlantic provinces, particularly Prince Edward Island. Tourism is now our third, and may soon be our second, most important source of income. We take a great effort to attract visitors to our Island, but, unfortunately, they are then very often left stranded for hours at the ferry terminals.

The importance of this industry to our small province cannot be too strongly stressed. We have no large industries as do the other provinces, for several reasons. We do not have easy access to the raw materials necessary for big industry. We have not the population to supply the necessary labour for large factories, but our greatest problem is in transportation for what we have to produce and export.

There are now three ferries crossing between Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. We were most fortunate in having the Northumberland ferries, as they are known, operating at the eastern end of the province at Wood Island during the days and weeks of the railway strike last summer. The men operating these ferries are not unionized, and great credit must go to Captain Hunter and his crews for their tireless efforts in keeping their ferries running day and night, thus helping to avert what might have been in some instances a real crisis. In the busiest part of the tourist season there are long lines of cars waiting for the ferries. During the rail strike of last summer, cars were lined up for over three miles from the pier, and drivers almost always had to stay by their cars in order to retain their priority on the boats.

This past summer, when all the ferries at the western end of the province were tied up for weeks by the railway employees' strike, great hardship was caused to many people; for some it was a real calamity. Some of our visitors lost their jobs on account of not being able to get back from their holidays in time. Children were late in returning to school, and there were even tragedies when people could not get to sick and dying relatives. The airlines, of which I will have something to say later, were not able to accommodate all those stranded by the strike. Altogether it was a dreadful situation.

There are six ferries running between the Island and New Brunswick during the summer months; indeed for almost eight months of the year. The great hardship that ensues when our ferries are tied up for weeks at a time by a strike can readily be visualized. Before we suffer further from crippling strikes, I appeal to those in authority to devise some machinery by which it will be impossible for the conditions of the summer of 1973 to recur in the province of Prince Edward Island.

An adequate ferry service is also necessary to provide Newfoundland with the necessities of life, such as vegetables, meat and milk. Owing to its terrain, Newfoundland does not lend itself to agriculture on a large scale. As honourable senators know, the same modes of transportation are used in getting to and from Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island—transportation by water and by air.

Honourable senators, there has been a great deal of talk of a causeway being constructed between Prince Edward