

Newfoundland Ferry Service

I should like to point out some other dilemmas. There is a small town at the base of the Bruce Peninsula called Wiarton. It is only 20 miles from the relatively large community of Owen Sound, and only 140 miles from Toronto. But an old person there, living on a limited income, is virtually isolated. For people like that it is not just a matter of \$3 for a berth on the ferry to go 90 miles, it is \$15 or \$20 by the time they order a cab to go the 20 miles to Owen Sound to get the bus—because there are no trains—to go to some other part of Ontario. It does not take a 90 mile expanse of water to isolate people, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Carter: Madam Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Will the hon. member for York West (Mr. Fleming) allow a question?

Mr. Fleming: Certainly, Madam Speaker. When I complete my remarks I will be pleased to do so.

I am saying that I can see the problem and perhaps the need for further subsidies, but I am also saying that rather than move on one particular motion it is an over-all transportation program which must be demanded on all sides of the House. It is extremely important that Canadians in any part of the country not be isolated. We must not just think of transportation as being able to move by bus anywhere in the urban community, but must remember that transportation also means relating to and communicating with other parts of the country.

As I say, Madam Speaker, the cost is great and the pie must be cut in many pieces. It is extremely important that we approach the matter with an overview, and not just concentrate on the problem of the 90 mile gap. We must understand that we must subsidize in all directions, not just between Newfoundland and the mainland, or the Northwest Territories down into the provinces. People in all outlying areas must have access to others. Even if a bus runs through a community just once a week it is a chance for the people there to get about and visit.

A lot of money has to be spent and the government has pledged to improve the situation. I share the concern that ordinary Canadians should have access to transportation from one province to another, from one town to another, at reasonable cost.

I should like to make one other point about the ferry service from the mainland to Newfoundland. It must be remembered that there are also a number of private enterprise competitive services running. I am sure my hon. friends, members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, would not want to deny that party's firm belief that competition and private enterprise should be encouraged. It is true we want a good service and do not want to rely on a service where the private sector could let us down.

● (1840)

I know that government service is provided. But if the subsidy is too great, if the outlay of the company is too small and if there is lack of competition, service suffers. One will then find that the level of service becomes lower, that the service is less efficient, that schedules are not adhered to. On the other hand a private corporation tries

to adhere to schedules, improve service, provide more comfort, and generally do better.

The hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie), who spoke some minutes ago, said we must share; that is, Canada as a whole must share the benefits of service with the people of the Maritimes. I agree that the federal government must make sure that service is provided equitably, and that we do not say to one particular area, "We are giving you a little more." That is why I cannot accept the motion, as worded. The government must be fair; it must provide an overview. It must make sure that benefits and services are offered equitably to all.

Either the hon. member for Hillsborough or the hon. member who preceded him said we needed national policies in transportation. That is exactly what I am saying, and that is why I cannot support a motion which pleads for parochial benefits, which asks for a subsidy for one area. I cannot support that. I would, however, support a policy which would make available on the same basis service to the people in Wiarton as well as to the people in the Northwest Territories, Newfoundland and other parts of the Maritime provinces. Finally, I think it is unfortunate that the motion compares the cost of travelling on the trans-Canada highway with the cost of running a ship. That comparison is unfortunate.

Mr. Carter: Madam Speaker, will the hon. member permit a question? To strengthen his argument the hon. member used the analogy of the small, isolated farming community. Surely there is a difference between a community which is isolated by 20 miles of land and one that is separated from the mainland by 90 miles of water?

Mr. Fleming: Madam Speaker, I think it is possible to equate two such communities. Let me say that the community in Newfoundland has available a heavily subsidized service. Actually, there are six or seven private services which people in Newfoundland can use if they want to move to the mainland. On the other hand, somebody living in an isolated region of southern Ontario may need to pay between \$20 and \$30 for a cab, which will take him only 20 miles, and then he must start paying for public transportation.

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Madam Speaker, I rise to support this excellent motion and congratulate the hon. member for bringing to the attention of the government the lack of transportation policy. It is all very well for the government to say that we must wait for a national policy which will solve parochial problems. The government keeps saying it has the answer, that it will bring forward a national policy. There has been such talk in this country ever since I was born, and the only solution to our difficulties has been the sporadic introduction of mish-mash solutions.

I applaud the sentiments of the hon. member who proposed the motion. He wants to encourage people to move across the country and visit each other. I think we should vote on this but I am afraid that the remarks we have just heard were designed to spin out this debate, to the point of precluding a vote.

As the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro) said, British Columbia coastal ferry services are not feder-