

Newfoundland Ferry Service

The western part of the province which I represent possesses unlimited natural harbour potential at Corner Brook, which is the hub for transportation of goods and services to the great northern peninsula and Labrador, and is in a direct communication link with Montreal from which the bulk of goods are shipped. It has been a most frustrating experience to get the government to allocate enough funds to provide reasonable harbour facilities.

In 1969, after many years of begging and cajoling, the government finally provided improved port facilities, but to emphasize the lack of planning, by the time it was completed, because of the steady build up of traffic it could not meet the needs for which it was designed. Now, finally, the government has agreed, after more begging, to increase shed space, and reluctantly has included some \$200,000 to make a start on additional storage space. Hopefully in future years, as the need requires, another \$800,000 may be provided.

The western part of my province has a development potential which should be looked at with the highest priority.

Consistent with the development of the port of Corner Brook is the need to look seriously at the continual expansion of that whole area, along with the adjacent Curling waterfront, where private initiative has supported the development of the fishery. This, tied together with the infrastructure support for the vast pulp and paper industry, warrants a determined consideration by the Ministry of Transport to coordinate with the province a transportation base which is vital to development of that part of the province. In addition the establishment of a linerboard mill just 50 miles from Corner Brook emphasizes the need to treat with the highest priority the further development of Port Harmon to ensure the success of access in and out of the Stephenville mill.

The government should be looking right now, in its reorganization of Atlantic ferry and coastal services, at the need for direct service from Port-aux-Basques and North Sydney to the Bonne Bay area to develop further the tourist potential of the Gros Morne National Park. Even with the additional ferry boats that the parliamentary secretary will tell us about, the service will not be able to cope with the influx of tourists who, hopefully, will be taking advantage of the unique beauty of this party of Canada.

On October 12 the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) and the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Jamieson), together with the President of the CNR, announced with great fanfare this reorganization and its major objectives of coordination, improvement and expansion of the present ferry and coastal services to meet expected increased traffic demands in the years ahead, as well as the immediate unprecedented influx of traffic which the present system is attempting to handle.

None can quarrel with the words used by these three knowledgeable gentlemen. In the news release the Minister of Transport said:

The creation of the new CN ferry and coastal operation is coupled with the Ministry of Transport plans for the purchase of new vessels and the construction of new terminals and passenger/cargo handling facilities. The fact that ferry and coastal services will continue to be a vital component of the transportation network has been amply demon-

[Mr. Marshall.]

strated by the tremendous increase in demand upon the services in recent years.

Then we had this statement by the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion:

... In addition to initiatives required to take care of the immediate needs, there was an obvious necessity for an overall programmed expansion of the services to meet the needs of regional growth in industry, commerce and tourism.

I can only wish this new organization well, but hope that the studies promised will be produced, and that when the recommendations are produced to provide the facilities we will not hear more tales of woe explaining that there will be deferment because of lack of funds.

● (1710)

One of the studies in which I am sincerely interested is the one on the Newfoundland-Labrador service, a service vital to the well-being of the inhabitants of that land mass. The meaningless contribution made by the federal government to that part of Canada justifies the use of the well-worn phrase "second class citizen treatment" when applied to northern Newfoundland and Labrador.

Apart from the complete lack of communication between northern Newfoundland and Labrador, other than the existence of a dirt road, the lack of development input to this part of Canada is nothing short of disgraceful. Certainly the northern vision does not include northern Newfoundland and Labrador, and this lack of vision is apparent in the CBC's aim to provide television and radio communication to only 98 per cent of the country. The CNT facilities still leave much to be desired in view of the fact that it is impossible on most days to communicate by telephone with citizens in the north, people who pay exorbitant rates to hear nothing.

Perhaps it is time for a change in the ministers who are responsible for that part of Canada, and I wonder if the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) might not consider taking over this responsibility.

Priority should be given to some meaningful exploration of the possibility of linking that part of the country with the national park area by continuing the construction of a decent highway to meet the proposed Labrador-Quebec highway. Also, consideration should be given to the proposed development of the lower Churchill to bring power to Labrador and Newfoundland. The Ministry of Transport should consider very seriously the establishment of a ferry service to cover the 10 to 11 miles between these two land masses. This should include other departments concerned, and should be undertaken in consultation with the province. The other ministers responsible would be the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald), the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Jamieson), and the Minister of State for Science and Technology (Mrs. Sauvé).

But the main point of my motion is to put on record the failure of the government to comply in a meaningful way with the Terms of Union Statement No. XIV indicating that after the date of union the CNR would be entrusted with the responsibility of operating the Newfoundland railway and coastal steamship services and that it would be their responsibility to ensure that the services fur-