

Supply—Transport

in this regard. I was wondering on this subject whether there were any other representations of which the minister or the deputy minister knows, and what factors are taken into account.

What I mean is this. I can sympathize with the chambers of commerce. They think we would have better service if we had an agency at the lakehead. What is necessary in order to get an agency at the lakehead? Should the harbour commission make a request? Has the harbour commission made a request? Another question is this. What would be the advantages of having it at the lakehead and what would be the cost to the government of setting up a new agency? Have there been any changes in the traffic pattern out of Parry Sound?

Mr. Hees: This is basically a matter of operation. Some representations have been made. I believe the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River made representations as well as some other people. These representations are all being considered. However, no decision has been arrived at yet.

Mr. Fisher: Mr. Chairman, I want to raise a matter that probably has more general application, and I think it is suitable to do it here. I have written letters to several ministers in this government complaining about the inordinate length and detail of their annual reports, and the fact that they have in them far too much information. I do not know what has gone into the gradual pruning down of this report over the years, but the situation has come to the point that in the annual report of the Department of Transport we get very slight information. I think every hon. member, in reading the annual report, likes to correlate it to the estimates, both in their item form and in their detail. On this particular matter here, where we have a vote for administration, I doubt whether we have a total of more than 250 words of information in the annual report. I do not want to go to the extreme of advocating a great deal of detail. However, what consideration has gone into this matter so that we wind up with such a slight source of background information?

I should like the minister to remember that he has one of the biggest and fastest growing departments. It is certainly one of the biggest spenders. Can we not get a bit more information? I should like to find in the report something about these agencies, shifts, changes and that type of thing. Perhaps it would be possible each year to concentrate upon a different part of the minister's department and to give more details. We know what the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources has been doing recently in its annual report. It has been taking a

[Mr. Fisher.]

section of the department activities and blowing them up in detail. I wonder whether we could have the minister's comment.

Mr. Hees: We used to produce an extremely lengthy and detailed report, and there were many criticisms of that report because it was too detailed and too lengthy. In order to try to meet those criticisms we have now produced a shorter and more concise report. However, the hon. member finds fault with it. We would really appreciate it if at any time the hon. member would come and see my deputy minister or any of our officials and make suggestions, which we would welcome with regard to how the report could be better done. At any time that he or any other hon. member wishes any information on any subject that is handled by my department, as I think he and all other hon. members know very well, they are welcome to come to the department. I will send them to the proper officials and will endeavour to get any detail on any matter that any hon. member of parliament wants to know about dealing with my department.

The Deputy Chairman: The hon. member for Richelieu-Vercheres.

Mr. Fisher: May I just follow up—

The Deputy Chairman: Order. I recognized the hon. member for Richelieu-Vercheres because I thought he was going to follow the hon. member for Skeena with a question. The Chair recognizes the hon. member for Richelieu-Vercheres.

Mr. Cardin: While listening to the discussions which have been taking place on this very important matter, I was struck by the fact that we are going into a situation which in the past has proven to be very delicate indeed and very controversial. What is happening now is this. According to section 91 of the British North America Act, navigation and shipping is definitely within the federal field. Within the past few days the province of Quebec has announced that it intends, according to speeches we have heard from the premier himself, to enter into the field of icebreaking in the St. Lawrence river, and in so doing it is coming to the help or aid of the federal government. As a matter of fact it is assuming a responsibility which comes definitely within the federal sphere.

This is a situation which is very similar to that of some years ago when the federal government, after being asked by the universities, aided the universities in the province of Quebec; where one level of government was helping out the other level of government. The hon. member for Chambly-Rouville stated that what we were trying to do here was deal with a question of policy.