

Supply—Public Works

situation that nothing which was done construction-wise created this ridiculous situation, so what did do it? Who was responsible?

Since the dredging was not responsible for the situation why is it that now, after all this money has been spent, we find that the *Carson* plies back and forth like a ghost ship across the water carrying no cars or passengers and a little handful of freight at an operating cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars last year and the big piers at Port aux Basques cannot be used? The minister says that it is ridiculous to suggest that the dredging has anything to do with it. I say that the government looks ridiculous, or someone for whom the minister is perhaps unfortunately responsible because if the dredging did not do it, what did? If the minister were employing a person who created a situation like that he would fire him summarily without notice and probably sue him for damages as well.

Then we are told that, in addition to having appointed a committee to study the situation and to find out what has to be done, in addition to having brought engineers from Britain and spending millions more on the breakwater, we are now going to make a working model of the harbour. We have got the machinery in the model calibrated so that the waves can play back and forth in the tank this summer, and perhaps some time they will decide what makes Port aux Basques harbour work or tick.

That is the situation, Mr. Chairman, and I think it was not helped the other day by the minister's statement. It is one which certainly requires a more definite statement than we received from the minister. The people want to know when these errors will be over and when the minister believes the harbour can be put into operation and the *Carson* resume its normal operations, assuming (a) that the present breakwater is all that is required and, (b), if it is not. Of course, the latter, as I said, involves using a crystal ball, but would the minister give the undertaking that if the breakwater is not sufficient we will proceed immediately to construct such other works as may be necessary to salvage this investment or else say frankly that the thing will not work and start a regular scheme of operations somewhere else.

Mr. Winters: Mr. Chairman, we have heard a speech that I think my colleague might have been justified in classifying as an emotional appeal.

Mr. Green: You give us an emotional answer.

[Mr. Nowlan.]

Mr. Winters: I dealt with this matter on the basis of facts, and facts, as I understand them, are something you cannot alter. The hon. member with his legal training may try to alter the interpretation that one puts on facts but the facts remain the same and unalterable. The facts as I gave them when this item was before the house a few days ago and as I gave them last year have not changed. There is nothing I can add or take away from them because they are facts. There is nothing anybody can add or take away from them regardless of what sort of language the hon. member uses in trying to cloak the facts and give them another atmosphere. It just does not happen. The people of Nova Scotia are used to dealing in facts and I am quite willing to have them judge the situation on the basis of the facts I put before them. The hon. member can make as many statements as he likes of the kind he has made here and also throughout Nova Scotia, which I know he has done. They are always interesting and entertaining but they add nothing to the situation and fortunately they take nothing away from the situation.

I think that the advice I have received on this matter and on which we have acted is as sound as anything I have heard from the hon. member today, and I am quite satisfied that if he were in my position he would do the same thing. We are bound by the terms of confederation to operate this service into the harbour of Port aux Basques and we want to make sure that the harbour is a safe harbour under all conditions of weather so that this steamship can operate on schedule. This service is not something that may be operated only when the weather is suitable. The C.N.R. wants to operate a scheduled steamship service and to do that they must have reasonable assurance that they can get the boat into the harbour under almost any conditions of weather.

The hon. member said that I come from a seafaring part of the country. That is true. I come from a seafaring family. My father has been one who has operated into and out of Port aux Basques. I think, without going further into that aspect of the matter, the hon. member can take my word for it that the harbour has always been an exposed and difficult harbour. But it is true that we are bound by the terms of confederation to operate a service into that harbour and we are taking what steps seem to be indicated, based on the best advice available anywhere, to make the harbour the sort of harbour that will fulfil the requirements that the operators of the ferry are seeking.