

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

the commissioners to present an interim report, then review it in the light of experience so far and decide if at this particular time it might not be better to call the whole thing off, at least until Canadian passions have been allowed to settle in the wake of the disturbance this particular commission has caused.

An hon. member: Two flags, two Canadas.

Mr. Guy Rouleau (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, first of all I should like to say that the purpose of the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) in establishing the bilingualism and biculturalism commission was to promote national unity in Canada and to save confederation. As far as newspapers are concerned, the commissioners appointed by the governor general in council by P.C. 1963-1106 of July, 1963, were given certain terms of reference which refer *inter alia* to the role of the mass communication media. The performance of the duties conferred upon them by those terms quite conceivably might lead them to study newspapers, etc. The decision whether or not to do so extensively would be one to be made by the royal commissioners.

TRANSPORT—DELAY IN SHIPMENTS OF FREIGHT
TO NEWFOUNDLAND

Mr. Richard Cashin (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, on the orders of the day I asked the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill) a question as to what steps the government was taking in order to alleviate the great backlog of freight that exists now on the run between North Sydney and Port aux Basques. The problem of freight moving to Newfoundland by that run is one that has been quite difficult for a great many years, and the service provided to consumers in Newfoundland all the way from Port aux Basques to St. John's is hampered by the lack of what we feel are badly needed facilities on the run between the two ports of North Sydney and Port aux Basques.

This, of course, is only one part of the over-all problem that concerns us in Newfoundland in respect of a co-ordinated federal policy on transportation. During the past year we have been greatly encouraged by the arrangement whereby the federal government will pay 90 per cent of the cost of building the trans-Canada highway, thus coming in line with the recommendation of the MacPherson report.

We are also encouraged by an earlier announcement last fall concerning additional [Mr. Rhéaume.]

ferry service to Newfoundland. At that time reference was made to an east coast ferry, an automobile ferry, and also an additional rail car ferry to go into service between North Sydney and Port aux Basques. This problem has existed for some time, but it has been accentuated in recent weeks in a temporary way by the unfortunate waterfront situation in St. John's.

There is a general feeling abroad however that we cannot wait until these new ferries are constructed. There must be some immediate action taken because of the seriousness of this problem. I point out that this question is again part of the over-all problem we have in Newfoundland. In particular, the MacPherson commission did recommend that there be a full transportation study, especially in Newfoundland, of its transportation problem. Action is necessary on this particular question because of the very recent waterfront situation in the port of St. John's and the declining business in the port.

It has been pointed out that one of the things that may in some way contribute to this is the lack of a co-ordinated federal policy. It was for this reason I did rise this afternoon to ask the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill) a question on this one aspect of transportation policy for Newfoundland. In the past year particularly we have been encouraged by the initiative taken by this government, it is still a fact we cannot wait for the completion of the long term plan. We do feel there should be some immediate action taken on these points.

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in order to meet the critical traffic problem foreseen to develop this summer and next winter, and for the next two or three years, the government has purchased and undertaken to convert the ferry *New Grand Haven*. This ferry was built in 1951 by Canadian Vickers Limited at Montreal, and until recently has been operated by a United States company between Florida and Cuba.

To meet the particular traffic requirements of the Newfoundland service certain modifications will be necessary and they will be undertaken in an eastern Canadian shipyard. The vessel will be ready for freight service between North Sydney and Port aux Basques early in 1965. The total cost, including conversion, will be approximately \$2,250,000, which I think makes this vessel, at today's prices, a bargain.

It is also going to meet an urgent need until such time as the rail car ferry can be con-