

*Supply—Transport*

All of this difficulty would be overcome if we had a crown corporation which was able to enter into this field with its first goal, although not exclusively, the provision of service to these up-coast points. Naturally I do not envisage a regular, daily call by a ship such as the *Prince George* or something of that nature. I do not envisage anything lavish in the way of luxury liners operating up and down the coast. This merely envisages a decent type of ship and service being provided to these coastal points. Many of them now get service perhaps twice a month or every other week, and some of them not at all. The people in some of these communities have to arrange to get their supplies or freight by travelling themselves by their own boats perhaps 60, 80 or 100 miles to some point of call of Northland Navigation. It is this suggestion that I commend to the attention of the government and the minister.

I am afraid that if something of this nature is not done we will continue to limp along with a deteriorating, declining passenger and freight service to up-coast points, and in addition we will be faced with having to increase the subsidy to Northland Navigation just as the government was asked by Union Steamships for an increase in order to put it on an economical basis. Since Northland is apparently operating on a shoestring their ships are deteriorating. They are not able to do the amount of repair and maintenance work on the ships that is necessary. They are restricted in their attempts to provide newer or additional boats for this service. I can foresee the time when this company, Northland Navigation, will come pounding on the minister's door, doing the same thing as Union Steamships did, saying that their boats are in such bad condition they need another quarter of a million dollars in order to put them back into shape. I am sure the officials of the maritime commission, as well as the minister, who watch this situation closely will have come to that conclusion too.

I think I will leave that phase of it there, for the moment. One cannot point out too strongly the great need there is for providing a better type of shipping service to these isolated up-coast points that now have to suffer tremendous hardship, and should not have to suffer any longer with the type of service that they have been provided in the past few years.

**Mr. Robichaud:** I only have a few brief remarks to make at this point of the estimates. I have two problems which I should like to bring to the attention of the minister. As the minister knows, we have operating from northeastern New Brunswick one of the largest fishing fleets of its kind on the

Atlantic coast. In fact in the Caraquet-Shippegan area alone we have a fleet of over 100 draggers and longliners operating, and a similar number operate from the Gaspé, Prince Edward Island and the Magdalen islands. What I should like to bring to the attention of the minister is the lack of storm warning systems in this area, which is at the mouth of Chaleur bay and covers certain sections of the gulf of St. Lawrence. In order to avoid such disasters as occurred around this time last year in the Northumberland strait I would urge the minister to have his department give serious consideration to the establishment of a storm warning station on Miscou island. Miscou island is located on the northeastern tip of New Brunswick. I would say 90 per cent of the fishing fleet to which I referred a moment ago operates within a short distance from Miscou island, and at least within radiotelephone range, with which all these boats are equipped. So I ask the minister if his department will give serious consideration to this suggestion.

Another matter which I should like to discuss very briefly, Mr. Chairman, is the reference which was made earlier this afternoon to the Chignecto canal. On numerous occasions over the last two or three years the minister has been referring to the preliminary engineering estimate of the Chignecto project which, according to the minister's own words, was being prepared by the Department of Public Works. In fact it was on March 4 last year, as reported on page 1593 of *Hansard*, that the minister advised this committee that, arising out of the work that had been done, he had asked for certain other estimates to be worked out. This is normal procedure on a project of such a nature.

Again on March 26 of last year the minister reported to the house that his department was giving very close study both to the economic and to the engineering feasibility of such a project. A few weeks later, on June 11, he referred to estimates ranging from \$90 million to \$140 million. On March 30 of this year, a year later, in reply to a question from my colleague the hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi the minister is reported as saying at page 2607 of *Hansard*, and I quote his own words:

An estimate prepared by a private engineering firm within the last year suggested a cost of about \$90 million, but subsequent review has indicated that government agencies concerned would find it difficult to accept technical assumptions made therein.

In recent weeks a report has been issued, prepared by the Chignecto canal committee and resulting from the preliminary investigation into the economic feasibility of such a project. We were informed by the Prime