

Supply—Transport

In addition, Mr. Chairman, I could possibly be considered to be somewhat prejudiced in this matter by having a personal interest, because if some of the suggestions that have been advanced in the course of this discussion were accepted, the C.P.R. might have to divest itself of that reservation it holds on mineral rights on the property on which my home is situated.

I would say, however, that when listening to the discussion on this question I did recall one of my first experiences after being elected as a member of this house. At that time the Canadian Pacific was operating what amounted to a monopoly transportation service by vessel along the west coast of Vancouver island. It was the only lifeline of communication for groceries, mail and everything else that those communities required. I had occasion to listen to some complaints about this service and, in a very conciliatory frame of mind, thinking there are always two sides to every story, I went to see the management of the Canadian Pacific steamship services in Vancouver. I wanted to hear the other side of the story before I made an assessment of this matter. I have never forgotten the abrupt manner in which the head of that particular division banged his fist on the desk and said: If she pays we will run her; if she doesn't we will pull her off. I do not recall whether I ever actually told that story before in the house, but if I had told it at an earlier date it might not have been so much in keeping with the general feeling I have observed during the course of the current discussion.

However, I should like to recall to the minister's mind some discussions that took place during a consideration of the transport minister's estimates when I was first in this house. If I recall correctly, the present minister was then Secretary of State. I have a vivid recollection of the exchanges that then took place between the late Mr. Gillis, the then hon. member for Cape Breton South, and the then minister of transport, now our High Commissioner in London, about the subject of linking Cape Breton Island with the rest of the province of Nova Scotia. Over a period of time investigations were conducted by the government and eventually a commitment was made for the construction of that causeway. Whether or not this ever happened, I do not know, but there was supposed to be some kind of procession across that causeway led, of course, by people playing the bagpipes, in which the then minister

[Mr. Barnett.]

of transport and the hon. member for Cape Breton South were to participate.

If I am correct I recall that even then there were some qualms among certain people on Cape Breton Island—and living on an island myself I can appreciate their sentiments—that in some ways this causeway might not be such a good idea, that it might make it too easy for Sassenachs and other lesser breeds without the law to travel freely into the inner sanctums of Cape Breton Island. However, I must say that I have not recently heard any serious complaints from members representing that interesting part of our country about the fact that the causeway was built. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, to the contrary, apparently the building of that causeway stimulated an increasing interest in the linking of another one of Canada's islands to the larger mainland part of the continent. Apparently over the years this also has borne some fruit. As I understand it, we are now committed to the building of a causeway to Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Pickersgill: We are building it.

Mr. Barnett: I am glad to hear that we are actually building this causeway. I have not been in that part of Canada recently, but I am glad to know that we have progressed to that point. This immediately raises another question. Where do we go from here?

Mr. Pickersgill: To Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Barnett: I recognize that we cannot do all these things at once. We did build the Canso causeway, which was considered to be a mammoth engineering project. From articles of that time it is apparent that when this construction was well under way, with the kind of engineering techniques and equipment then available, it became clear that it was a somewhat more simple job than earlier forecasts had indicated.

• (7:40 p.m.)

We are now building a causeway to Prince Edward Island. If I understand correctly it will span a distance of some nine miles, and perhaps the minister can correct me if I am not completely accurate in that figure. The fact that this is under way led me recently to ask a question of the Minister of Transport in the House of Commons. Perhaps I might direct the attention of this committee to page 808 of *Hansard* for February 7, where I asked the Minister of Transport:

Now that the Prince Edward Island causeway is under way, will the government undertake to