

*Supply—Transport*

conferred with representatives of the board of trade. He indicated that the Canadian National Railways are going to spend a good deal of money in the improvement of the rolling stock, the roadbed, and services generally.

It was decided in advance that Newfoundland would become part of the Atlantic region with headquarters in Moncton, so that the railway has been governed from Moncton, New Brunswick, ever since. Previously, when we had the Newfoundland railway it was operated from a general headquarters in St. John's. I am wondering if after three years' experience the minister is satisfied with the arrangement that has been carried on up to the present, because it means that various officials have to be going from Moncton to Newfoundland to see how things are being done. I believe there would be a better esprit de corps if the management and their representatives in St. John's had full charge of the Newfoundland service. Newfoundland is an island, and one would naturally think that it would be on its own and not tied in with New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia.

I noticed that the estimates generally have increased by about \$10 million. This is not surprising in view of the increases in costs for the various services.

In regard to the improvements which are to be made in the services to Newfoundland, I want to refer especially to the steamer across the Cabot strait. Last year there was a vote of \$2.5 million put in the estimates for this service. The minister told us this afternoon that not \$50,000 has been spent of that item as yet. I wonder how much has been spent and what progress has been made. I hope that if he feels it convenient to reply he will tell us exactly what has been done, and what money is to be voted this year. Will it be like last year, with only about 1/50th of it being spent? I have in my hand an item appearing in the press which is dated January 9, and it says that the contract for the construction of this vessel was awarded about a year before, that is at the beginning of 1951, to the Canadian Vickers Company in Montreal. The article goes on to state that the keel of the ship had not yet been laid and nothing had been done. In fact, it was doubtful if anything would be started before next summer—that is this coming summer. We were under the impression that it had been started, and the excuse given in January was that there was a shortage of steel. I hope that situation has improved so much that the contractors feel confident enough to go ahead with this construction of the steamer.

[Mr. Browne (St. John's West).]

The same thing applies to contracts that are going to be let for two other steamers to be used in the coastal service around Newfoundland. Construction of two coastwise steamers of the Bar Haven type has been authorized and tenders have been called. It is anticipated that the contract covering the building of these ships will be awarded in the near future, according to an article in the press dated May 1, 1952. I wonder if those tenders have been let and when the contract is likely to be awarded.

Although the improvements that are being made are very extensive and deeply appreciated by the trade and the public generally in Newfoundland, there are still other things needed. I have in my hand an editorial from the *Daily News* of May 3, 1952, which points out that importers in St. John's have complained of the long delays in the receipt of shipments from mainland centres during the winter season. Many instances have occurred of mislaid freight which must be due almost entirely to deficiencies in handling and storage facilities. Local shippers also find that the system of taking freight for special routes only on certain days often involves them in high costs and inconvenience. An advertisement will be put in the paper that freight for Bonavista will be taken on Friday or Saturday, and you must have it ready on that particular day or it will have to remain over a long period of time. Shippers feel that they should be permitted to bring the freight in in advance, and that they should not be tied to a date.

Some shippers are also complaining that they are not given sufficient notice of the time limit for freight delivery. Frequently advertisements appear in the paper that the time for freight to be delivered to such and such a place will close at nine o'clock tomorrow morning. I am not sure of the time, but the idea is that the shippers do not have time to get their freight ready so that it can go on any particular steamer. In justice to the minister I should say that this editorial does admit that when the Canadian National took over the railway in Newfoundland it took over a headache. It was only to be expected that, with our inadequate revenues and the comparatively small amount of freight that was going over the line at that time, we could not keep it in the condition that is necessary now.

I should like to refer to a matter of interest to a great many people in Newfoundland, and it concerns the small sailing vessels. Since we joined with Canada we have come under the Canada Shipping Act. Small vessel owners are complaining that the regulations which apply to ocean-going steamers