

*Supply—Transport*

Transport, it could be possible to avoid once and for all the flooding, these inundations, which take place on both sides of the river because of the frazil ice in the whole of the Laprairie basin.

As the committee knows, where the Mercier bridge crosses the St. Lawrence river there is a very narrow neck of the river, and because of the tremendous amount of water which comes down during the non-navigation period there is created a condition which is tantamount to an ice-making plant. This ice has the capacity and the strength to pile up and cause tremendous damage. So that it is important that the ship channel which we are discussing now is kept open during the non-navigation season. The officials of the Department of Transport have done their best over the years to make recommendations in accordance therewith to the department, and over that period of years the department has seen to it that more and stronger ice-breakers were constructed in order to avoid this serious and dangerous situation.

So that with respect to this item, the two suggestions which I would like to make are: One, the widening of the ship channel to a minimum width of 800 feet and, second, the addition of more icebreakers to operate in the channel so that the ship channel would be kept open not only from Quebec to Sorel but all the way up from Sorel to Montreal.

**Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert):** Mr. Chairman, may I ask the hon. member whether he thinks we should use icebreakers to keep the St. Lawrence open for navigation to the detriment of the winter business of ports such as Saint John?

**Mr. Chevrier:** I expected that question, Mr. Chairman, and I am glad the hon. member asked it. If the hon. member had listened to what I said, he would have seen I was dealing exclusively with the question of inundation and flooding. I did not discuss the other. But since my hon. friend wants to know what I would say with reference to the second part of his question, I would add this, that because of the opening of the St. Lawrence seaway it has been estimated that the traffic will be trebled in that area. That being so, I have no doubt that the port councils and authorities of the ports of Saint John and Halifax, which associations and groups are alert, will want to make sure a substantial portion of this traffic accrues to them.

Item agreed to.

**Railway and Steamship Services—**

781. Payments to the Canadian National Railway Company (hereinafter called the company) upon applications approved by the Minister of Transport, made by the company to the Minister of

Finance, to be applied by the company in payment of the deficits, certified by the auditors of the company, arising in the operations in the calendar year 1958—further amounts required—Prince Edward Island car ferry and terminals, \$24,689.

**Mr. Chevrier:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to know what plans the government has in mind, since we are now discussing the Prince Edward Island car ferry and terminal, to build a causeway between the mainland and Prince Edward Island. The minister will remember that is a matter of extreme concern to the house. It was a matter which was discussed on more than one occasion, and was, I believe, recommended to the royal commission on economic prospects. I would like to know whether the government has any plans in this respect and when these will be made known?

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** Mr. Chairman, the subject is under study. As I think my hon. friend is aware, engineers have been retained to make a study.

**Mr. Chevrier:** Then still dealing with the item, notwithstanding the study which is being made, I would like to know whether or not the hon. minister is aware that the services which now operate between Prince Edward Island and the mainland are quite inadequate? My question is, what provision pending this study of the causeway is being made by the government for an additional service between Prince Edward Island and the mainland, because the present car ferry services are certainly not adequate?

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** This item provides for the deficit in the operation of the present Prince Edward Island car ferry service. The operating revenues have increased, but the operating expenses have increased substantially more than the revenues.

**Mr. Chevrier:** Does the government intend to build another ferry pending the consideration which will be given to the causeway? As my hon. friend knows, the study of the causeway and even a recommendation favourable to a causeway would take a matter of quite some time. I am not able to say, but it would certainly take a matter of years. What is going to happen to the service in the meantime? Is consideration being given therefore to the construction of an additional ferry?

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** Mr. Chairman, no step has been taken with reference to any possible increase in the service, pending the report of the engineers on this present survey. The government will be guided by the reports which are received at this preliminary stage of the engineering study.