

Supply—Transport

that that would be a direct slap in the face to the citizens in that part of Canada. I am very much surprised and disappointed to hear the minister say that this new boat is being designed to be driven by oil. I am pleased that these new facilities are being provided, a wharf at North Sydney and another at Port aux Basques, and the provision of a large new ferry steamer. I am sure all hon. members in the house are pleased that this is being done.

We want to have this service operated with the best boat that can be made available. But I would ask the minister why preference has been given to oil. There seems to be a tendency now in Nova Scotia, particularly in connection with the Canadian National Railways, to sidetrack coal and use oil-burning locomotives. Oil is being used even on through trains from Montreal to Halifax, and on the Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island railways. I understand that most of the shunting engines in the maritimes are now diesels, and that they have been authorized for the Gaspé service. I would ask the minister if it is too late to reconsider the motive power to be used in this new steamer.

Mr. Chevrier: This ship will be very much similar to the *Abegweit*. It will be required to carry freight and passengers and also to break ice at certain seasons of the year. It has been found that diesel electric motors operate more cheaply and more efficiently with oil than with coal.

Mr. Black (Cumberland): Does the minister think that he can justify the use of a diesel boat, oil-driven, out of coal-mining centres such as North Sydney, Sydney Mines and Glace Bay, the greatest coal field in Canada? We have these great national resources and yet this boat which is to operate in this territory is to be driven by oil.

Mr. Chevrier: That is what was done with respect to the car ferry *Abegweit*, and the proposal was put forward by a minister from the maritime provinces.

Mr. Black (Cumberland): That was done after protest by the people of Nova Scotia, especially those in Springhill, where for years they had enjoyed a market for from 25,000 to 40,000 tons of coal per year. There was no justification for the use of oil on the *Abegweit*, and I am sure there is no justification for the use of oil on this boat we are referring to.

Item agreed to.

500. Ogden Point piers, Victoria, B.C.—construction or acquisition of buildings, works and land—capital, \$55,000.

[Mr. Black (Cumberland).]

Mr. Fulton: What is the purpose of this vote?

Mr. Chevrier: It is to enable provision to be made for adequate storage areas for the collection of lumber cargoes made necessary by an increase in lumber movements at Victoria. The asphalt paved areas will be increased.

Mr. Fulton: I notice in the details on page 479 that during the fiscal year 1949-50 there was an expenditure of \$165,000, and then last year there was a vote of \$43,000 with an actual expenditure of \$26,704. Is this vote in connection with the same work?

Mr. Chevrier: It is an entirely different expenditure. The expenditures referred to, if my memory serves me aright, were made following the visit of a departmental committee after protests by the city council and which came to the conclusion that additional repairs were required.

Item agreed to.

Pensions and other benefits—

503. Railway employees provident fund—to supplement pension allowances under the provisions of the Intercolonial and Prince Edward Island Railway Employees' Provident Fund Act so as to make the minimum payment during the period January 1, 1951, to March 31, 1952, the sum of \$30 per month instead of \$20 as fixed by the said act, \$14,250.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I think this is the only item that would permit the bringing up of the general question of railway employees' pensions. There are a few words I should like to say in addition to those I expressed the other day in regard to the pension system of the Canadian National Railways. When the matter was up on the last occasion, because of the circumstances under which it was brought up the minister did not have an opportunity of explaining the present situation. As far back as 1947 I brought up the question of something being done in order to improve the situation of employees of the Canadian National Railways who were on retirement. I brought this matter up again in 1948 and used these words, as reported on page 939 of *Hansard* of February 6, 1948, which I think are as applicable today as they were then:

—that the time has come for the government to give consideration to a permanent upward revision of the basic pension, with a view to a material increase therein, and in the meantime while consideration is being given to that a cost of living bonus ought to be provided for. The basic pension rate today is woefully inadequate. Equity demands its revision.

That was in 1948 and at that time the \$25 per month basic pension had been in effect since 1935. The other day figures were given of the number of Canadian National employees in receipt of \$25 pension upon retirement, that being the basic pension. The minister