

Ferry 'hit and run' brought up in House of Assembly

Ford Oldford claims a provincial ferry hit and damaged his private wharf near Burnside

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Liberal

Roland Butler wants Transportation Minister Trevor Taylor to apologize and compensate a Paradise man who's wharf was damaged.

The Telegram first reported on this incident May 17. It became a topic of discussion in the House of Assembly Monday.

Ford Oldford claims a provincial ferry — Sound of Islay, which was operating between Burnside and St. Brendans in Bonavista Bay — hit and damaged his private wharf near Burnside in March.

Butler began by asking Taylor what the protocols are when a provincial ferry damages private property and if procedures were followed in this case.

Taylor said he was notified shortly after the wharf was damaged.

"I believe that most, if not all of the official processes were followed with the exception, Mr. Speaker, of whether or not the individual who owns the wharf was contacted in as timely a fashion as should of happened," he said.

Taylor said the incident is under investigation.

"I can't vouch for whether or not our ferry damaged that wharf or not, I wasn't there that day," he told the House.

But he did say a captain of a provincial ferry is off on paid leave pending an investigation on whether disciplinary action is needed.

Taylor said he wasn't sure if that investigation and what happened to the wharf are the same incident or not.

Butler, who called what happened a "hit and run," said as of Monday morning Oldford had not had any communication with the Department of Transportation.

He asked Taylor to formally apologize and tell Oldford if the province will pay for repairs.

"All he has seen is an e-mail statement from the minister to The Telegram which was reprinted in the paper this past weekend," said Butler.

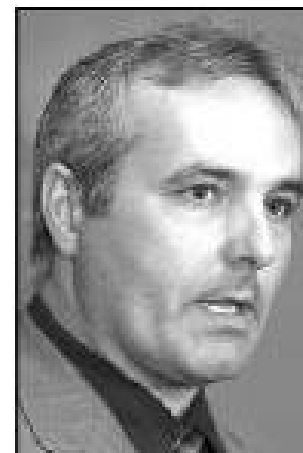
In that statement, Taylor did apologize.

But Monday, Taylor suggested the wharf may have been damaged by ice.

"Once we establish whether or not we damaged that wharf, if we damaged it, we'll compensate," he said.



Roland Butler



Trevor Taylor

Taylor also said an apology would also depend on the investigation.

Butler said someone from the department has already stated the wharf was indeed damaged by the ferry. Taylor shot back. "Either the owner of the wharf or the honourable opposition transportation critic needs to get their story straight," said Taylor.

He asked if Butler contends no one contacted Oldford, how did someone from the department confirm the ferry is to blame.

Butler clarified by saying it was a relative of Oldford's who spoke to a department official. That prompted a round of jeers from the government side of the House.

Labrador Affairs Minister John Hickey shouted across the House at Butler, calling him "the laziest politician in the House."