

*Supply—Public Works*

to spend on matters coming under his jurisdiction. It is also a pity that the Prime Minister has seen fit to remove from the scope of that jurisdiction the administration of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. I would have liked us to remain faithful to tradition on that point. Things being what they are, I can only extend my heartfelt sympathy to the minister, who probably also feels some regret at seeing his powers and responsibilities thus whittled away.

Mr. Chairman, I thank the minister for the courtesy with which he has always listened to my suggestions about changes to be brought to inscriptions and signs on parliament hill, inside parliament itself and within various federal buildings. When I suggested replacing signs in one language only by signs written both in English and in French, the minister followed in the footsteps of his predecessors, who never failed to comply with my requests.

Actually, Mr. Chairman, it is not without a certain pride that I remind the house that when I came to Ottawa in 1957, as a member for the St. Hyacinthe-Bagot riding, most notices on doors and elsewhere on parliament hill, were written in one language only, that is to say in English.

At that time, I tried hard to make some recommendations which resulted in those bilingual notices that can now be seen almost everywhere, instead of unilingual ones.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to mention the fact incidentally, because I think it is better to keep in the background while working and then succeed, than to make a lot of noise, as has been heard for the past couple of years, with only indifferent results.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the officials who assist the minister in his work. They are most understanding and have always given me a maximum of co-operation when I approached them with requests. Indeed, I know from my own experience that when reasonable requests are made to the Minister of Public Works or his officials, they are always quite ready to help and have only one object, that is to give the best possible service to the people.

And how could it be otherwise, when we consider that, since I have come to the house I succeeded in convincing the officials of that department that certain projects should be carried out in my riding, at a cost of \$1,200,000? Mr. Chairman, I point out those facts without boasting and without excessive humility, whether it pleases my good friend from Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm (Mr. Pigeon) or not.

I think that without the co-operation of the present minister's predecessors and of the

officials, I certainly would not have achieved such results.

In his introductory remarks on his estimates, the minister made a brief review of the situation he found in his department when he took over. He indicated that the estimates were prepared by his predecessor and he did not see the need for a detailed analysis of them. But we would have liked him to take a little more time and give us the reasons for the statement he made on October 18 last, as can be seen on page 3760 of *Hansard* where the minister stated:

However, we have slightly changed those estimates and to enable the house to get a better understanding of the various projects and amounts you are called upon to approve, I intend to give you some essential explanations and I will do it alternatively in French and in English.

Mr. Chairman, may I point out that I have read this statement of the minister several times, and it may be that I cannot read between the lines, but I find no justification the minister might have given for the cancelling some items or affecting additional amounts to other projects. In fact, the minister told us he had cancelled some \$2.5 million, while he asked us to pass additional projects for some \$6.3 million.

We would have liked the minister to tell us—and we were entitled to know—which projects he thought it was his duty to cancel and what additional projects he added, as well as the reasons justifying those cancellations or additions to the budgetary estimates for the current year.

I find it a little difficult to understand why the officials, after thinking out the plans of the previous administration, were not somewhat aggrieved at the decision of the minister to make such large cuts in the estimates they had prepared for the year 1962-63. Those officials are known for their broadmindedness and their impartiality as well as for their desire to serve the people, and surely until the time the present minister took over the department, those officials did their best in the preparation of their work.

Unless the minister gives us the reasons why he decided to make the changes, we are entitled to wonder on certain obscure points.

Mr. Chairman, as it is the first time that I address myself to the Minister of Public Works since he assumed his post, I shall avail myself of the opportunity to utter a few requests in order to improve the postal services in my constituency. Those requests will also tend to reduce unemployment which prevails in my constituency, for, as you know, Mr. Chairman, my constituency is not different from the others.