

Supply—Public Works

Mr. Chairman, I wonder, and so do many of my colleagues, if the minister is not prejudiced against Quebec.

Mr. Chairman, I have asked myself that question, especially after having noticed the minister's attitude during the famous investigation made by the public accounts committee about the printing bureau in Hull. The present Minister of Public Works, who was then the executioner of the government within that committee, first asked Major General Young to prove his qualifications as an engineer and then asked him the following question, as shown in the proceedings for Friday, August 8, 1958, of the standing committee on public accounts:

Q. Could you tell us why that location was chosen for the national printing bureau in Hull?

That was the first question asked, Mr. Chairman. Why did we build on that side, on the Hull side? In my opinion, that goes to show there was something in the minister's mind that most of the people from Quebec could not consider as too flattering and too commendable. That is why I am coming back to that subject again.

It was suggested that Hull was not an ideal location and that the construction of the printing bureau was a scandal.

In order to prove that those allegations are false, I ask hon. members to refer to items published in 1959 in the *Citizen and Le Droit*. Those are statements made by Mr. Raymond Blattenberger, whose position in the United States is similar to that of the Queen's printer in Canada.

The article read as follows:

I would hope that we would retain the services of the architect, said he. Notwithstanding what was said last year during the investigation carried out by a parliamentary committee, the architect did a good job, according to Mr. Blattenberger. Indeed, he added, the functional organization of Canada's national printing bureau is much better than what we have in the States.

In my opinion, this testimony of an expert is just as good as some of those which were given at the time. Even though certain things and certain additional expenses which had to be made gave rise to some criticism, I am sure we would not have to do too much research to show that the present government has made expenses which were much more extravagant than those we are accused of having made at that time.

Mr. Chairman, I would have much more to say on the matter if the minister were in the house, but I do not want to take up too much of the time of the committee. However, I trust that this government, for the little time it will remain in power, will try to correct that situation by giving something to that Quebec district.

If it does not do so before the next election, I am convinced that the Liberal party, which

[Mr. Caron.]

will form the next government, will see to it itself.

Mr. Paul: Do you think that if the Liberal party happened to take over, the building of the interprovincial bridge would proceed as quickly as it did under the St. Laurent administration?

Mr. Caron: Mr. Chairman, it is very easy for me to answer that question. I may say that, since 1953, the Ottawa government was ready to build the bridge in co-operation with the Ontario government. But Mr. Duplessis himself told me: "If Ottawa wants to have bridges, let them build them. As far as we are concerned, we shall not build any."

Only the election of the Lesage government in Quebec made it possible for an arrangement to be made between Ottawa, Quebec and Ontario for the building of that bridge. The Union Nationale did nothing for that project.

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Chairman, may I be allowed another question? Would the hon. member for Hull inform the committee whether he shared the views of the previous minister of public works (Mr. Winters), who decided to build federal buildings ten miles away from parliament hill, although the city of Hull was right at the door?

Mr. Caron: Whether it was the fault of the Hon. Mr. Green, of the Hon. Mr. Winters or of the Hon. Mr. Walker, every time a government has gone beyond reasonable limits instead of coming into the Quebec side, I have taken strong exception to it.

Mr. Flynn: Mr. Chairman, I should like to deal briefly with a statement made by the hon. member for Hull, who accuses the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Walker) of being opposed to the construction of government buildings in the province of Quebec. He has only brought forward, as evidence, a question put by the Minister of Public Works during the inquest concerning the national printing bureau made by the committee on public accounts. It seems that the hon. member for Hull is basing his contention on a question put to Major General Young: "Why was this site chosen?"

We know that such a question on the selection of a proper site for the building of the printing bureau made sense, if we consider the springs which started to run afterward and which required very expensive additional work. It is absolutely unfair of the hon. member for Hull to have drawn from that question the conclusion that the Minister of Public Works was opposed to the building of the printing bureau in Hull. I do not object to the speech of the hon. member, but I would ask him to kindly not adduce such a weak argument, which in no way justifies him to draw such a conclusion.