

*Supply—Public Works*

According to the investigation I carried out, the last statement on this subject was made by the Prime Minister who indicated that certain provinces were objecting to an increase in hospital construction grants. This was somewhat incomprehensible to me. He further indicated that this was a matter of discussion between the federal government and the provinces. Is there any later report which the minister can give the committee so that we may know where this question stands? The responsible minister in British Columbia told me he hoped we could look forward to an increase in this grant. Could the minister bring us up to date?

**Mr. Benson:** I am afraid I cannot do that. I would have to take this matter up with the Minister of National Health and Welfare within whose ambit it rests. I will undertake to do this and give the hon. member a reply as to the present situation.

**Mr. Barnett:** Since this is a matter of great interest to those concerned, would the hon. gentleman suggest to the Minister of National Health and Welfare that he make an early statement to the house on motions or in some other appropriate way?

**Mr. Benson:** I will be pleased to bring that suggestion to the attention of the minister.

**Mr. Winkler:** I want to say that I take serious and grave exception to the type of letter which is going out from supporters of the government with regard to the representations being made to members of the government for increases in old age security benefits. I have before me a copy of a letter from the hon. member for Peterborough who is blaming the opposition, particularly the Leader of the Opposition, for preventing the accomplishment of this object in legislative form. I take exception to this and ask that my protest be noted.

Item agreed to.

**The Chairman:** That completes the supplementary estimates of the Department of National Health and Welfare.

• (6:20 p.m.)

## PRIVY COUNCIL

15e. Expenses of the royal commissions listed in the details of the estimates, \$150,000.

**Mr. Howard:** Can the minister give us some indication what is happening with respect to the royal commission investigating Post Office Department grievances?

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**Mr. Benson:** This is the one with respect to conditions of employment and I believe the Postmaster General said in the house the other day that the report was expected by June 30.

**Mr. Howard:** Though the minister may not be able to answer this directly, I ask the question to indicate interest on our part and notice of our intention to proceed further with it. Many moons ago a royal commission on pilotage was appointed and we have been waiting with bated breath what presumably is going to be a voluminous and detailed report by that commission. Is that commission still in existence and when can we expect its report?

**Mr. Benson:** I know it is still in existence but I cannot indicate when it is expected to report. I can ask the Minister of Transport about it.

**Mr. Howard:** Then could this by-play between the minister and myself be taken as notice that I wish to follow this up with a question on Orders of the Day to the Minister of Transport?

Item agreed to.

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

1e. General administration, including grants as detailed in the estimates, \$44,500.

**Mr. McIlraith:** Mr. Chairman, last Friday when these estimates were being discussed some questions were raised about the problem created by the practice of fill being put in waterlots along a long stretch of the shore of lake Ontario. The same matter was raised again today. I think I should explain where the responsibility of this parliament lies and how the situation is somewhat complicated by a division of jurisdiction.

The provinces own the land under the water, in other words, these waterlots, and it can be transferred by them to private owners, as is the case in the situation presently under discussion. When private owners acquire the waterlots the federal government cannot interfere with that in any way. Then the municipal affairs department of the province and the governments of the municipalities have jurisdiction in the ordinary way over building permits and that sort of thing. The federal authority has jurisdiction over the subject of navigation, and it is only in that connection that it is able to have any legislative responsibility and can take legislative action as set out in the Navigable Waters