

Supply—Public Works

look after pedestrians crossing there, so they would not be injured, or in danger of being run down by automobiles.

I should also like to say at this time that we need quite a few wharves up in that constituency, especially in the northern end. There is great need of a wharf at Laforce, and also great need of a wharf at Belleterre, as well as at Notre Dame du Nord.

I would ask the minister to give consideration to these projects at the present time. We would hope to have them all included in these estimates, or in the supplementary estimates. I would also ask him to give consideration to two new projects we will need in the near future in the counties of Pontiac and Temiscamingue. I refer to the interprovincial bridges between Fort Coulonge and the Ontario shore, and between Quyon and the county of Carleton.

Mr. Higgins: Following the requests from the new "province" of Pontiac-Temiscamingue I do not feel at all worried about bringing forward the small matter I have to discuss—that is, if the minister has any money left, following the requests of the hon. member.

What I have to say involves a grave matter of principle, and it is to that particular phase I would direct the attention of the minister this evening. It is a matter that involves the Secretary of State, myself and the premier of Newfoundland, as well as the minister's department. I bring it to his attention at this time because I think the matter must be disposed of before we go further.

Perhaps I should lay a foundation for what I am about to say. As will be recalled, back in 1949 I brought forward a request for a wharf at Portugal Cove, and kept on bringing it forward each year. Finally this year we find in the estimates an item of \$250,000 for the building of that wharf. The premier of Newfoundland disclosed on February 4 of this year that a wharf would be built, and made this statement:

The agreement reached between the Department of Public Works in Ottawa and myself is that the government of Canada will build a new public wharf in Portugal Cove. This, needless to say, will be a very great improvement over the wharf presently there. At the head of this same wharf, the government of Newfoundland, under this agreement, would build a section to receive this ferry. The bow of the ferry is rounded, and she would fit snugly into the ferry section of the wharf.

In the Newfoundland provincial house a question was asked by the leader of the opposition, who is a member of the party to

which I have the honour to belong. His question was this:

What, if any, decisions have been arrived at by the government relative to:

- (a) the repair of said wharf, or
- (b) the construction of a new wharf.

The answer was this:

While discussions have been held between the government of Newfoundland and the government of Canada, no final decision has been reached.

There is a question of principle involved in this matter, with which the names of the Secretary of State and myself are concerned. On January 16, referring to the same wharf, the premier of Newfoundland said:

If there are new wharves in Bell island and Portugal Cove not Gordon Higgins will do it. Gordon Bradley, yes, but not Gordon Higgins. Any federal matter affecting Newfoundland, Gordon Higgins can talk till he is black, blue and red in the face and the man who will do it is the Secretary of State, the Liberal leader of Newfoundland, in the House of Commons, the Hon. Gordon Bradley.

And farther on he said:

These things, my friends, will be done by Liberalism, federal Liberalism, provincial Liberalism.

I am quite certain in my own mind that the Secretary of State is not involved in this matter in any way. I feel certain he would not be a party to it. I just wish to have the assurance from the minister that the statement I have just read is incorrect. Moreover, I should like to have the details in the matter.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): I hope the hon. member does not expect me to contradict what a colleague of mine has said. I did not hear clearly what he did say as to what was reported.

Mr. Higgins: I was referring to a colleague of yours, to whom reference was made by the premier of Newfoundland.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): I was referring to the Secretary of State. The premier of Newfoundland is a friend of mine but, as yet, he is not a colleague. At page 416 of the estimates there is an item for wharf improvement and roadway approach at Portugal Cove. Now, let us start from the beginning of this story about Portugal Cove. Some years ago the hon. member asked me to build a wharf there to accommodate the ferry. My answer at the time was that ferries within the provinces were not under federal jurisdiction. I said that we were ready to repair and maintain wharves for the general public but, so far as ferries were concerned, within their autonomous powers the provinces should put up the wharves, or make a contribution to that work.

That was some years ago. I see now that we are getting close to an agreement whereby