

Supply—Public Works

than those of the previous year. I am sure the people of Canada will be somewhat dismayed to find there is not more evidence in these estimates of the great works program to which the Prime Minister referred in his broadcast from Winnipeg on February 12 in which he said that his government had already launched a program which was going to total \$11,085 million and that \$270 million of that amount would be spent in the first three months of this year. While we admit that this expenditure would be spread over several departments I believe it is reasonable to assume that a great deal more than approximately \$40 million of that \$11,085 million should be accounted for in the estimates of the Department of Public Works. But if there is no evidence of this huge public works program at the present time perhaps that is just as well because President Eisenhower in a recent broadcast referred to such programs in terms of their being a solution for the unemployment problem as something which would result in a minimum of jobs and a maximum of budgetary headaches later on.

I should like to draw to the minister's attention the special needs we have in Newfoundland particularly in small post offices for more space than is normally required in post offices on the mainland. I do not know how this accommodation is allotted but it is reasonable to assume that some comparison is made with the needs of communities of similar size on the mainland. However, the minister must remember that in most instances on the mainland a mail is received every day while in Newfoundland, and particularly in the coastal regions and in the riding which I represent, a mail is not received oftener perhaps than once a week. Frequently in the winter time mail is received only every two or three weeks and in some cases only every month. When the mail does arrive the local post office is required to handle perhaps ten or 20 times as much mail as would be handled in a post office of similar size on the mainland. I have been in post offices when a mail has landed and know that the postmaster has had no room to turn around and some of the mail has had to be stored in outhouses and in the lobby.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Carter: Not the kind you are thinking of.

There is a need for much greater space in the small post offices in Newfoundland than is required in similar stations on the mainland. I should like to plead with the minister to reconsider the plans that have already been approved for the public building at Marystown. I know he has had a great deal of correspondence about this

[Mr. Carter.]

already but I can assure him from my personal knowledge and observations that the space which it is proposed to provide in the new building is totally inadequate. I would also ask him to reconsider the plumbing arrangements for this building which are not at all in keeping with the size and importance of the community. The site for the building is a miserably small plot, big enough only to accommodate the building itself. It makes no provision whatever for expansion which will have to be undertaken in the not too distant future. I urge the minister to completely reconsider this building because at the present time it is not a credit to this parliament or to his department.

In the matter of the acquisition of sites I would suggest that the present policy of delaying purchase until they are actually needed is a shortsighted one because land values are increasing at a rapid pace. Many of the communities where public buildings will be needed in future are growing fast. I have particularly in mind the community of Channel where a public building is urgently needed. Consideration was given to this matter several years ago but for some reason or other for which I have never been able to find a satisfactory explanation the plans never materialized. It is going to be exceedingly difficult to secure an appropriate site for this building at Channel. I would urge the minister to have a survey made immediately and acquire whatever land is available because it certainly will not be available much longer.

Mr. Green: What was the name of that community?

Mr. Carter: Channel-Port aux Basques. It is a twin town but I understand that the latter part of the name is not in best of favour in his department so I left it off.

With regard to the specifications for public buildings I should like to call the minister's attention to the fact that here is a wonderful opportunity to assist local industries which is also one of the best ways of solving the unemployment problem. We have in Newfoundland a very fine birch veneer plant which produces a quality product that compares very favourably with other products of a similar type that are available on the market. This plant does not have an opportunity to tender on public buildings because the specifications actually specify some other product. I understand that the two public buildings under construction in St. John's at the present time, the post office and customs building, are employing British Columbia fir and other products that are no better than what we produce ourselves.