

Supply—Public Works

call me, the latter said that there was no need to call me, and that he would lend the man \$225 on the strength of the note signed by Mr. Bédard.

That, Mr. Chairman, happens during election campaigns. I see the hon. member for Beauharnois-Salaberry shaking his head.

• (8:50 p.m.)

Mr. Laniel: Just Beauharnois.

Mr. Caouette: Just Beauharnois. That is a lovely riding, but the hon. member is not quite as handsome as his riding.

Mr. Chairman, I will be told that that is but a slight case of political patronage. It is indeed. Why send a junior officer of the Department of Public Works? I sometimes call on senior officials in the department and I am treated very pleasantly. I get very good replies, for which I thank those who run the department. However, why send Mr. Bédard? Why, first of all, was he sent to give out small sums of \$125 or \$150 for slight repairs to be made to a wharf? These people are wasting their time with such money-tricks, trying to win votes and train organizers paid for the duration of the election campaign.

Mr. Chairman, this is a method which I would not use. I do not sit on the government side of the house; I could do such things, but I do not. People are free. But when important works must be done in a constituency, Mr. Bédard should be there and make appraisals. It is in such circumstances that Mr. Bédard should render a service not only to a political friend of the government, but to the public as a whole.

Now, with respect to the Department of Public Works, I have nothing else to say this evening, because I do not want to delay the consideration of the estimates. However, I insist that the minister and the officials should seriously consider the logical requests, whether they come from a Liberal, a Conservative, a Cr ditiste or a New Democratic constituency. It does not matter. All Canadian citizens, whatever their allegiance, pay taxes to the federal government and they are entitled to be treated on the same footing and with fairness. If we want to establish social justice and the just society, it is time to restrict petty political patronage during election campaigns and to act intelligently in the best interests of the people.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I ask the minister to consider the possibility of acceding to my requests for the constituency of T miscamingue. Since other members are making

[Mr. Caouette.]

requests for their constituency, I am doing the same for mine.

In the first place, as for the Rouyn post office, let us demolish the hen-house and build a post office.

Then, as for the bridge at Notre-Dame-du-Nord, it is essential to rebuild it. In addition, the shores of Lake T miscamingue should be developed so as to protect the land. In fact, we have wonderful land in the constituency of T miscamingue, but if we permit erosion by the waters of lake T miscamingue, later on, we will have problems other than those which we now have.

Therefore, I call the attention of the minister to the immediate needs of the constituency of T miscamingue.

[English]

Mr. Stewart (Cochrane): Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for South Western Nova alluded to the cost of the arts centre. Before going further could the minister tell us whether it is proper to discuss the estimates of that building at this time? This matter, as hon. members know, is before the committee on broadcasting, films and assistance to the arts, and we were told in that committee that it might be dealt with in the public works estimates. Is it to be dealt with in detail this evening or is it to be left to another committee?

Mr. Laing (Vancouver South): Mr. Chairman, I can probably shorten this discussion by saying that the National Arts Centre is to be dealt with in the estimates of the Secretary of State and should not be discussed under the present vote. In any case, as the hon. member knows, the matter is now before a standing committee of the house.

• (9:00 p.m.)

Mr. Stewart (Cochrane): Mr. Chairman, I wish to bring to the minister's attention a serious situation in my riding, in which he may be helpful. In my riding of Cochrane is the town of Kapuskasing in which is a landmark known for many years as the Kapuskasing Inn. This is a solid brick and steel building worth about \$750,000. It was erected some years ago by the Spruce Falls Power and Paper Company and was used as a hotel until recently. A few weeks ago the building was closed because it represented a liability; the company is not in the hotel business. I happen to know that the company in question would be interested in making this building available for community use, provided some