

Supply—Public Works

in the terms of the reciprocal agreement with those states. Just recently within the past few weeks a representative from the Department of Labour attended a discussion held in the United States on this subject, the movement of labour across the border. He reported to me that the United States authorities now have a more lenient attitude toward the problem. We hope to follow it up and bring about a satisfactory conclusion in that respect.

Item agreed to.

173. Transfer of labour to and from places where employment is available and expenses incidental thereto, in accordance with regulations of the governor in council, \$75,000.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I should like to ask the minister if he could tell us how many areas in the Atlantic provinces are now declared labour surplus areas coming within this vote and how many people have been moved out of those areas in the Atlantic provinces under this vote since the first of the year?

Mr. Starr: Mr. Chairman, there are two areas designated labour surplus areas, Springhill and Bell island. We have had inquiries from two firms interested in a few hundred of the men from Bell Island. That is the reason why this area was designated as a labour surplus area, in order to allow us to pay the cost of transporting the worker, his wife and family and household effects to the location of his new employment elsewhere in Canada.

There were 42 workers and 23 dependents transferred from the Springhill area in the last fiscal year for which we paid their expenses to other jobs elsewhere in Canada.

Mr. Pickersgill: Have there been any yet from Bell island?

Mr. Starr: As far as I know there are no reports of any being transferred as yet.

Item agreed to.

Mr. Denis: Before we get through with the estimates may I be permitted to revert to item 168 just to ask one question while the officials are here?

The Deputy Chairman: Has the hon. member the consent of the committee to revert to item 168?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Denis: I should like to know from the minister whether the province of Quebec has received any benefit from this item which has to do with a program for combatting seasonal unemployment, the organization and use of workers for farming and related industries and assistance to the provinces under

agreements entered into with the provinces and the federal government?

Mr. Starr: I regret very much, Mr. Chairman, that that information is not available on my desk at the moment because of the fact we had passed the item. I should be glad to convey that information to the hon. member.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The answer is that the province has not.

Mr. Starr: I want to be sure.

The Deputy Chairman: That completes the estimates of the Department of Labour.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

318. General administration, \$9,335,045.

The Deputy Chairman: This item will be found on page 64 of the blue book and the details on page 416.

Hon. Howard C. Green (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Chairman, the estimates of the Department of Public Works are set up in such a way that most of the discussion and questioning takes place on the different items, but I thought it might be helpful on the first item if I gave the members of the committee a brief summary of the work of the department during the last fiscal year which ended on March 31; then, a brief summary of our plans for the present fiscal year which commenced on April 1. Also there are three or four particular projects about which I think the members would like to have special information.

The work of the department has been quite severely handicapped because of the severe winter weather conditions which existed during the last winter in most parts of the country. However, the departmental activity was maintained at a very high level and I should like to pay tribute to the officials from coast to coast. They have been working under great pressure and have a great many projects under construction. I am sure that all hon. members who have had any contact with the department during the last year—and I would think that that includes everybody, judging from the letters I get—will agree that these officials have done a very good job.

The high level of activity is reflected in the total departmental expenditures of \$220.3 million for the fiscal year 1958-59, which is an increase of approximately \$8 million over 1957-58 and \$55 million over the year 1956-57. On the building construction side of the departmental program in 1958-59 the expenditures totalled \$60.5 million compared with \$52 million in 1957-58 and \$45.4 million in 1956-57. Expenditures on the construction of new harbour works as distinguished from