

*Supply—Public Works*

constructed new facilities or modernized those built many years ago to meet horse and buggy demands in order to meet the demands of this modern day and age in which we live.

It is generally agreed by all concerned that this is one of the situations which might have been brought to the attention of the minister had hon. members been allowed to take part in the debate sought in the motion earlier today. It is my suggestion that the departments of government should not be divorced from one another and that when responsibilities affect large segments of our economy and our natural resources departments should work together so that an improvement accomplished by one will result in an improvement in the others.

**Mr. Rose:** Mr. Chairman, in rising to speak during the debate today I should like to say that in general I have supported the stand taken by the Minister of Public Works on the Roberts Bank superport issue in British Columbia. The minister was extremely forthright and decisive initially with the provincial government on this matter but as of late I feel he has been discreetly quiet.

I should like to make a protest about the veil of secrecy that has been dropped over the whole matter of the Roberts Bank superport, both by the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Public Works. This matter is of the greatest consequence to the future planning of the lower mainland of British Columbia and is probably more important than any project in recent memory.

As recently as August 17 I wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Transport and W. A. C. Bennett, the premier of British Columbia, in which I said that in view of the extensive ramifications of this project for the future of the lower Fraser valley and the resulting controversy, would it not be pertinent at this time to examine the Canadian National alternative route along the south bank of the Fraser river, a route which, incidentally, is favoured by the lower mainland regional planning board. Further, it would seem logical for a publicly owned railway to serve a port facility at least partially financed by the federal government. It appeared to me at that time and it appears to me today that this whole scheme has proceeded with undue haste, unreasonable secrecy and insufficient regard for the views of those people who are going to be most affected by this project.

On September 24 I submitted a notice of motion for production of papers and it was only recently, over a month later, that the

[Mr. Peters.]

government finally agreed to produce those papers. I hasten to point out that I have yet to receive any of the documents requested, but at least the government is on record as agreeing to produce them at some time.

I feel now as I have felt for some time that there is federal pussyfooting about this project and that the government has been less than frank with the house about the Roberts Bank negotiations and agreements. It is not to the advantage of anyone that this be allowed to persist.

The original proposal, under which the rail line to serve Roberts Bank was to go through the finest agricultural area in the lower mainland and finally proceed along the shoreline of Boundary bay, which incidentally is the last major recreational resource on the lower mainland for the purpose of public recreation and also as a wildlife refuge, created a huge public outcry. Premier Bennett recently bowed to this public outcry and after one of his famous second looks ordered a study to proceed under Mr. J. Broadbent, vice-president and general manager of the Great Eastern, a provincially owned railroad.

Mr. Broadbent's study and proposals have resulted in some alterations of the original proposal so far as the rail lines are concerned. However, while conducting his study, Mr. Broadbent neglected to consult the chief planning agency for that area, the lower mainland regional planning board which represents 28 lower mainland municipalities and is ultimately responsible for lower mainland regional planning. It seems ludicrous to me that the chief planning authority for the area should not even have been on the team to assist Mr. Broadbent in his study and recommendations.

The Broadbent proposal, as some members may recall, suggested that the existing Canadian National rail line be used from Clayburn to Fort Langley where it would then connect with British Columbia hydro links and finally the port, thus avoiding the rather tortuous and very costly route through the mountainous area of Matsqui, known as Mount Lehman and Bradner. The proposal also suggested that the rail line be removed some two miles from the beaches at Boundary bay to avoid very serious despoilation of the last warm water beach in the area. This seems to me to be a compromise, but it may be only part of the over-all concept. I am forced, because I have no documents, to make some guesses and assumptions. This government leaves me no alternative by denying me