

## Supply—Public Works

taken place. In spite of any excuse the minister might offer he cannot lay claim to acceleration, unless it is acceleration in reverse. Was the handling of this project in keeping with the government statements on their actions to relieve unemployment?

The expenditures in public works for this constituency for the fiscal year amount to \$21,000 for the Baie Ste. Anne wharf extension and \$40,000 for the lower Neguac wharf extension, two projects that were in the district engineer's plans for 1958 during the former government's term of office.

At this point I should state that Northumberland-Miramichi received several public buildings, many new wharves and wharf extensions under the Liberal government since I have been a member, all of which were designed to assist the fishing industry, shipping facilities and provide buildings for public services. Last year when I raised the question of financial assistance by the federal government towards the erection of a proposed highway bridge at Chatham, N.B., I was advised that the federal government did not assume any responsibility for the construction of highway bridges within provincial boundaries. On December 20 of last year, on pages 2711 and 2712 of *Hansard*, the following questions and answers are recorded:

Question No. 286—Mr. McWilliam:

1. During the past two months did the Minister of Transport receive representations from the Chatham, N.B. board of trade, in connection with the highway traffic problem and proposed construction of a highway bridge across the Miramichi river at Chatham?

2. If so, did the minister reply to such representations, and what was the nature of the reply?

The reply was tabled by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transport and reads as follows:

1. Yes, a telegram was received from the board of trade.

2. The following reply was sent:

"Your telegram November 29 requesting survey traffic conditions relative to need for a bridge at Chatham have spoken to several of my officials and must advise cannot find any indication the proposed bridge would be a federal government responsibility. The bridge would be within province of New Brunswick and consequently I would suggest your representations be addressed to the province."

These answers further confirmed, at least in my opinion, the department's policy concerning responsibility for erection of highway bridges within a province. I ask now, does this policy still exist? Has there been any change whatever from the former policy? I should like also to ask the minister if his department ever received a request from the government of New Brunswick for financial

assistance towards the construction of a proposed highway bridge at Chatham across the Miramichi river.

This matter has been a political football for the past few years. The provincial government has failed to take any action. Newspapers and political aspirants have promoted the view that it is a federal responsibility, in part as a result of the location of the Chatham R.C.A.F. station. The federal Conservative candidates in the 1957 and 1958 election campaigns promised the construction of this bridge. They failed to give any consideration whatever as to where the responsibility lies. These statements misled the voters of the area, many of whom never gave any thought as to which government was responsible for construction or whether it might be a joint responsibility. A decision on this aspect of the problem is necessary so that the parties concerned can direct their efforts along the proper channels.

The minister is familiar with this situation. When he was campaigning last spring the bridge committee of the Chatham board of trade interviewed him. A report in the *Chatham, New Brunswick Gazette* of May 6 stated in part, and I quote:

At the conference held with Hon. Mr. Green, every assurance was given the committee by Mr. Green that he would co-operate in every possible way and explore every available channel to enhance the erection of this bridge. It is therefore planned that the committee will, if necessary, journey to Ottawa and discuss the matter further with the hon. Minister of Public Works.

At this conference did the minister advise the committee on the government's policy of erecting or giving financial assistance toward the erection of highway bridges, exclusive of the trans-Canada highway bridges, solely within provincial boundaries? If he did state a policy, and I think he should have in order to keep the discussions within the proper channels, what policy did he state? Has the policy changed from last year? Has the bridge committee asked for an interview with the minister? Has the minister invited this committee to come to Ottawa and discuss the matter? The responsibility, in whole or in part, for the construction of this proposed bridge should be cleared up now.

The provincial government continues to draw red herrings across negotiations. They promised a survey five years ago, but no action was taken. Perhaps an indefinite start will be made on the survey on the eve of the next provincial election. In the light of the press report in the *Chatham Gazette* which I just quoted, the minister gave the bridge committee some very nice sounding words. However, I wonder what they contain? Those words only added to the confusion amongst