

Supply—Public Works

there should be a drydock in that city. In my opinion it is a great tragedy that the former drydock was sold. Has the government any plan that would lead to the establishment of a new drydock there?

Mr. Winters: Mr. Chairman, this is something about which the present chairman knows a great deal. He has been very keenly interested in the developments there as the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Applewhaite). We were very sorry to see that drydock leave Prince Rupert. It was operated under an arrangement with the Canadian National Railways, and they felt that they did not have enough use for it to merit the very heavy expenditures it was costing. There did not seem to be anybody else available who was interested in taking over the drydock, and it was thereupon sold. To the best of my knowledge, there is no action on foot now and none contemplated to replace the drydock at Prince Rupert.

Mr. Green: I am sure the chairman will endorse my remarks. Would the government give some consideration during the coming year to plans which might lead to the re-establishment of a drydock in that city?

Mr. Winters: The government is always ready to give consideration to any proposal. I do not know that there is any proposal before us by anybody. A marine railway was once discussed, but I have not seen anything of it for some considerable time now and, as I have said, I know of no proposal to replace the old drydock at Prince Rupert.

Item agreed to.

Item 370 agreed to.

Roads and bridges—

371. Maintenance and operation, \$336,643.

Mr. Pearkes: With regard to item 371, I notice in the details as published on page 478 that provision is made for a bridge over a canal and a causeway connecting the city of Kingston with the village of Barriefield. I was wondering whether any representations have been made—and I feel quite certain they have been made—from the city of Victoria regarding the Point Ellis bridge. This bridge spans an arm of the Victoria harbour and connects the capital city of British Columbia with the important naval base at Esquimalt. This bridge has been a hazard to navigation for a great many years. There are now signs at both ends of the bridge that all vehicles must stop before they go on to it and they are allowed to proceed across this rather long span at only ten miles per hour. The result is that a great deal of military traffic coming from Esquimalt will have to go

by other routes if it has to reach Victoria. It has to go around by the trans-Canada highway, the new highway that is being built.

Citizens of Victoria and the district of Saanich have really become exasperated at the long delays in getting anything done regarding the construction of this bridge. A vote was taken and a bylaw was passed recently as a result of the plebiscite, authorizing the city to proceed with the construction of a new bridge. I noticed that there is a substantial sum provided, \$136,000, in the details under general items. I also understand that the city of Victoria and other organizations have made representations to the minister for a grant towards the completion of this bridge.

There is a very definite federal responsibility connected with this bridge because it is used very extensively by naval and military vehicles. There is no doubt that any funds which the minister could provide out of this general grant would be used this year. He has expressed some reluctance about making available money that is not going to be used in the current year. There is no doubt that a start would be made on reconstruction of this bridge during the coming year, and I hope, without making any sort of emotional appeal but making a very practical appeal, that the minister will say that there is the responsibility on the federal government, that there is the need to have this new bridge and that assistance from federal funds is essential. Could the minister tell me whether there have been representations made, as I feel certain there have been, and, if so, whether the dominion government will be prepared to assist in the construction?

Mr. Winters: There have been representations. The former mayor of Victoria saw me on one occasion with the member from Victoria, and I think he subsequently saw the Minister of National Defence. I was obliged to tell him then that the government does not consider it has a responsibility there and that the provision of an adequate bridge is a local responsibility.

I am well aware of what the hon. member has said about traffic and the navigational aspects, but they are not enough to involve the federal government in financial participation. We are quite prepared to examine the navigational aspects and give those approvals which are necessary and which we can under the authority of the Navigable Waters Protection Act give to authorize a bridge being built in an appropriate manner and in an appropriate place, but there is no obligation upon the federal government to participate financially.