

Supply—Public Works

minister will see that a good bridge is built. There are good sites in the city of Hull, both in South and West Hull and there are good sites at Gatineau Point, all of which are near the centre of Ottawa, and all would be suitable for the purpose of decentralizing and alleviating traffic problems as excellent space is available for parking purposes. Such projects would be of great benefit to the people in that area.

Mr. McWilliam: The minister, in introducing his department's estimates, gave a long list of projects which were said to have been accelerated in order to provide employment. He tried to leave the impression that he was doing great things in opening up a new large scale program of public works which would cure our unemployment problem. The fact is that in large measure this works program was started by the former government and many of the current plans were made by that government.

An examination of the estimates brings forth a much different picture from that painted by the minister on Friday last. This great works program will fall short of relieving unemployment to any worth-while extent. The urban centres may benefit somewhat but the rural centres across Canada will find no relief from the works itemized in the estimates. In fact, the cost of surveys, drafting plans and specifications and the purchase of materials will take up a great portion of the funds allotted leaving, in many cases, only a small amount for actual wages.

With respect to the acceleration mentioned by the minister, I wish to draw the attention of the house to a newspaper article appearing on June 10 last in the *Ottawa Journal* from which I read in part as follows:

Charge Delay in Government Work

Complaints were registered by building trade union officials in Ottawa today at the delay in the public works department in calling tenders for many millions of government contracts.

The 1958 construction program for Ottawa is estimated at more than \$100 million. At the moment there were 200 carpenters waiting for work.

The minister has tried to make quite a play on what his department accomplished in having a start made on the Campbellton-Cross Point bridge, between the province of New Brunswick and Quebec, which connects northeastern New Brunswick with Gaspé. The minister, by perusal of departmental files, could ascertain that the previous government some years ago offered to pay its share of the cost of this bridge, but that the provinces of New Brunswick and Quebec would not enter into an agreement at that time. The people of New Brunswick, particularly the people of the northeastern part of that province, are very pleased that the governments

[Mr. Caron.]

of the provinces concerned have finally entered into an agreement so that by means of this three-way proposition a start on the construction can be made.

The minister's remarks with respect to acceleration of public works do not apply to a federal public building at Newcastle, New Brunswick. Tenders for this building were called by the former government and the contract was awarded to the Kenny Construction Company in 1957, over a year ago, but what we find today is just a hole in the ground. The construction bogged down when the old building was torn down. This project would have provided employment during the last winter and during the spring months which would have been very beneficial to the unemployed of the area. The minister will say, no doubt, that delays were caused by a request for a change in the plans made by town officials. In this regard I would like to quote from *Hansard* November 20 1957, at page 1355, as follows:

Question No. 178—Mr. McWilliam

1. Have steps been taken to begin construction of the federal public building at Newcastle, New Brunswick?
2. Was a change made in the site of the building?
3. If so, of what nature?
4. Did it entail much change in plans and specifications?

The answer filed by the parliamentary assistant to the minister was as follows:

1. Yes.
2. Yes.
3. The town officials made available a 10-foot strip of land to the rear of the crown site and it was therefore possible to meet their request that the building be set back 10 feet from its planned position to help traffic conditions.
4. No.

Question No. 4, which I should like to repeat reads:

Did it entail much change in plans and specifications?

The answer was no. On January 22 of this year I asked the minister the following question which is found at page 3606 of *Hansard* for that date:

Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Public Works. Can the minister advise as to the cause of the long delay in commencing the erection of the federal public building at Newcastle, N.B.? The answer to order paper question No. 178 on November 20 last led me to believe that construction would start shortly after that date.

The minister's answer was:

Mr. Speaker, I did not receive notice of this question until just as I was coming into the house, and I will have to make inquiries and obtain the answer.

Now, Mr. Chairman, from the facts as recorded in *Hansard* of last session it is clear that a long and quite unnecessary delay has