

*Supply—Public Works*

were given the least bit of government support and encouragement I am sure it would become the capital of the east coast of Newfoundland, and might easily become the capital in many ways of the east coast of Canada. Hon. members are aware of the facts inherent in that statement.

For several years the town of Gander has been in need, but not lobbying for, a new public building. Before I came to Ottawa, some time during the election campaign, my opponent made reference to the need for this public building. I believe there was some preliminary statement about the construction of such a building in 1970. Since I came to Ottawa I have been in continuous correspondence with the Postmaster General about this need to house postal facilities as well as other facilities. About a month ago I obtained a commitment that the new building would be started in 1970. I very happily communicated this information to my constituency, where it was well received.

I was delighted that the government had finally realized an obligation in this regard to provide a necessary structure. Several weeks later I received notification from the minister that, on the basis of information he had, these plans had temporarily been set aside. I am not sure he used the word "temporarily", but he informed me that the plans had been set aside and that postal facilities would be extended in the community and the other people occupying the building, like the R.C.M.P., customs and excise and various other government officials would be farmed out to a number of offices in the community of Gander.

I was hoping that this would not come to pass. In the past few years this has been one of the busiest small towns in Canada. Right now we have a very inadequate public building. What this new plan will provide is modest post office facilities and accommodation for various government department officials in various new offices throughout the town. This is certainly not the way to achieve some of those ends indicated by the minister in his preliminary statement.

The minister said we could not afford to curtail office accommodation. We cannot afford this kind of activity because in the long run it will result in an increased burden on the taxpayer. I urge the minister to take heed of this particular plea. It is not often I get the opportunity to stand in this house and make reference to specific points such as the one I bring to the minister's attention now. I

[Mr. Lundrigan.]

hope he will at least give consideration to investigating this situation and, like the Minister of Transport, I hope he will heed the advice of the people from these areas, because they know all too well the problems facing these communities. I say to the minister that we do need this building and I assume he will take note of what I am saying and have his officials investigate the matter and remedy these present inadequate public facilities in the town of Gander.

I could go on for quite some time outlining a number of problems, but there are other hon. members who have problems of equal importance.

• (9:40 p.m.)

**Mr. Marshall:** Mr. Chairman, in rising to speak on the estimates of the Department of Public Works, I hope we can all accomplish as much as we did this afternoon in the debate on the estimates of the department of supply and services. There was such a spirit of camaraderie prevalent this afternoon and there were so many bouquets flying around that one might have thought the government and the opposition had declared a truce.

In the short time allotted I wish only to make one plea, and my request deals with the harbour development in the city of Corner Brook, Newfoundland. I cannot stress enough the vital importance to the future economy of the whole of western Newfoundland of the completion of this project. The port of Corner Brook serves the city of some 30,000 people and it is rapidly becoming the main distributing centre of goods and supplies for western and northwestern Newfoundland and Labrador, an area with a population of over 130,000 people.

The development of new roads and bridges has made this port an essential transportation link and the gateway to the whole new and exciting area of Newfoundland. The central section of the existing Corner Brook waterfront consists of docks of Bowater and Western Terminals and the C.N.R. wharf. These docks which were built on timber piles in 1920 and should have collapsed years ago are inadequate for the volume of cargo passing through them. It was predicted that these wharves would not last beyond 1967. However, at great expense they were planked and stitched together last year, and are in such bad shape that the main carriers threaten they will abandon their service after this season. Trucking concerns will not let their heavy trucks over the wharves for fear of collapse. Last year Western Terminals handled over 74,000 tons of cargo. This could