

Supply—Public Works

proceeded with just as rapidly as it reasonably could be proceeded with—by both governments.

I do not, in what I say with respect to this matter, wish to inject any note of controversy which is not already there. However there is, as the minister knows, a dispute in St. John's as to whether this is the best way to develop the harbour, and I want to say in the most non-controversial way I can something about that dispute. First, I must say there is a great deal of disappointment in St. John's—and this was reflected in an editorial the other day in the *Sunday Herald*—over the fact that there is no work being done on the harbour, and no evidence that work will start on the harbour at an early date.

I was rash enough to say during the election campaign that, in my opinion, there would be no substantial employment, except for lawyers and those concerned with the acquisition of property, on the harbour development during 1958. I will be very happy if I turn out to be wrong, but I do not think I will. At the rate the government is now proceeding that will be the situation.

But to return to the controversy about the harbour development, I do not pose as an expert. Everybody who remembers those terrible years between 1940 and 1945 knows how important St. John's harbour was to the whole cause of freedom during that period and how important it is that St. John's harbour should be developed as a defence measure, if for no other reason, in such a fashion that it will be of the maximum advantage, not merely to Newfoundland and to St. John's but to the whole country, in the event of another wartime emergency.

Of course St. John's is a very small harbour, even in peacetime, but we hope the steady increase in the population of Newfoundland and in the development of resources will mean that the harbour of St. John's will become increasingly busy. It is terribly important, therefore, to make quite sure that whatever development does take place will provide the maximum amount of space for berthing and for manoeuvring in the harbour. Although I am a ship owner I do not, as I say, pose as an expert in these matters; but as the owner of a vessel I am naturally somewhat concerned that there should be adequate space for the berthing of all the vessels which want to use St. John's harbour at one time.

Mr. McGrath: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Pickersgill: Certainly.

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

Mr. McGrath: The hon. member has just finished lauding the previous administration, of which he was an active member, on the Foundation Company plans for the development of St. John's harbour. Subsequently he told the house something of the controversy which has been going on—

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. McGrath: Perhaps the hon. member would care to inform the house what stand he takes in this controversy?

Mr. Pickersgill: I thank the hon. member for St. John's East for bringing me to the point to which I was coming anyway, and I am very happy to answer him. As I was about to say when the hon. member rose, I have no personal opinion as to whether the Foundation Company's plan is a good one or whether the alternative suggested by various distinguished citizens of St. John's is a better one. The only thing I would like to see, and I am sure the minister and the hon. member for St. John's East and the hon. member for St. John's West would agree with me in this, is that this matter should be resolved in a manner which will be of the maximum permanent benefit as well as the maximum immediate benefit to the people of St. John's, the people of Newfoundland and the people of Canada.

With respect to nine-tenths of the plan there is no controversy whatsoever. With respect to the development of the south side of the harbour, in so far as I have been able to read the documents—and I do not know whether I have read them all, because the minister has not yet been able to table them, but I have conscientiously tried to read such as have come into my possession—there is no controversy whatsoever, and there is no reason for any delay there at all. The only controversy is with respect to the waterfront between Water street and the harbour on the north side, and that is as to whether there should be a breastwork for the whole length or, I believe the figure is, only for 650 feet. On that point I must say my feeling is that if it can be done it should be done for the whole length, and I think almost anyone who has ever had anything to do with the berthing of vessels would feel the same way.

It is hard not to believe it would be a great deal better to have the whole length of the harbour along Water street developed for berthing instead of having a 2-3 grade, which would make it impossible to bring vessels alongside a good deal of the waterfront.

The main controversy, as the minister knows, and as all hon. members from Newfoundland know very well, is about the