

*Supply—Public Works*

a position where we did not have the need to create employment, that was one building which would very well have been held off but it is being put ahead for the purpose entirely of providing employment.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I wonder whether the minister would permit one question? This morning I paid him and the department a tribute for spending 97 per cent of the department's allotment. I am coming to think I made a mistake in doing so. With all that long list of works included in the estimates for last year which were not proceeded with—and I use the minister's own term—surely he does not mean to say that notwithstanding that, 97 per cent of all the estimates for the department were spent.

**Mr. Green:** The figure of 97 per cent is accurate. The department has never before been able to spend anything like that percentage of the vote in a year. We aim to spend 100 per cent but you cannot always do that.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** That is impossible.

**Mr. Green:** Every day or so there are problems which crop up. For instance, we can go back to the post office in Wesleyville. In some of the centres we find that people want four or five different sites and that there is a rather violent quarrel in the community as to where it is to be. Things of this sort delay the construction. There are other projects where there have been difficulties of one kind or another and which the department no matter how efficient it might be, in my opinion could not avoid.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The minister is suggesting that these projects which the Leader of the Opposition read out—a quite substantial list of projects, some of which seem to be rather large—constituted substantially less than 3 per cent of his total estimates?

**Mr. Caron:** Mr. Chairman—

**Mr. Bourget:** He is getting an answer.

**Mr. Caron:** I will wait for the answer.

**Mr. Green:** With regard to the question raised by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate, may I say this. The estimates for 1957-58 had to be reduced by the amount of \$2.7 million covering those buildings and other works where there was delay. If that reduction had not been made, we would have spent 95.7 per cent as against the 97 per cent.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The minister did not do quite as well as he claimed to have done.

**Mr. Green:** I did not do it at all. It was the departmental officials who did it, and I think they have done a grand job.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** So do I.

**The Acting Chairman (Mr. McGee):** Order. May I make a suggestion to the committee concerning remarks at this stage of the resolution and I do so without seeking to cast aspersions on any remarks by any hon. member in any quarter of the house to date. I might suggest that we confine our remarks in such a way that they be pertinent to the department and that we do not attempt to re-fight the last election.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Those remarks should be addressed to the minister.

**Mr. Caron:** Mr. Chairman, I will not try to re-fight the last election. The only thing I would like to say about the little discussion a while ago is that when the minister spoke last Friday he was not quite so ticklish as when he was accusing the previous government of not doing anything with respect to public works. He has a right to be ticklish once in a while because he seems to have so much fun with others.

The last time I spoke my subject was that of protection walls and I hope the minister did take note of the points I raised and that the matter will be referred to the supreme court because, since Quebec says it is the responsibility of the federal government which the federal government denies, we do need some clarification.

Today I wish to mention that there was an understanding between the government and the federal district commission some years ago that public buildings should be decentralized in order to help with the problems of traffic circulation and parking facilities in Ottawa and the surrounding districts. However, some of our new public buildings are being built miles and miles away from the centre of the capital, all on the Ontario side, in spite of the fact that a good part of the territory with which the federal district commission is concerned is on the Quebec side.

Up to now we have been treated as poor relations of a big family, and I want to ask that the minister and his department take a look at some of the beautiful spots we have on the Quebec side which would be suitable for public buildings and would be much nearer the centre of the city than some of the new public buildings which are as much as six and seven miles from the main government buildings. They seem to extend further and further and they will soon stretch far beyond the city limits. Since the public printing bureau was constructed nothing has been built on the Quebec side of the river.

I believe we are still part of Canada and our services are good with the exception of the lack of a bridge, but I trust that the