

*Supply—Public Works*

When the hon. member started out he thought there really was no point in discussing this subject again as he had done so a number of times previously. This raises a matter which goes beyond this particular problem. I listened very carefully to the problem he raised. I think it was explained well enough and the departmental officials must have known about it for at least a year and perhaps longer because the hon. member brought up the matter on a number of occasions.

Personally I am of the opinion that the problem raised is one affecting an individual riding and therefore it is the hon. member's responsibility as a member to bring it up on behalf of his constituents. This is not something that should be put off; rather, a reasonable answer should be provided.

It may well be that the Navigable Waters Protection Act is out of date. I know it has not been applied in many cases where it should have been applied. I have read the act because I represent an area in which there is a large body of interprovincial water. Several other acts are involved including one going back to the time of Queen Victoria. I have read many of the sections and they are very specific in terms of building wharves, docks or obstructions of any type.

I had hoped the minister would say he would stand the item and ask the departmental officials to give some consideration to the argument made by the hon. member. I believe that it should not pass until a decision is made one way or another. I think we have an obligation and I feel I have an obligation to help the hon. member obtain some logical explanation in respect of the problem he has raised which concerns a large number of his constituents.

If we as individual members raise problems which affect our constituencies during the consideration of the estimates and cannot count on immediate attention by the departmental officials in respect of these problems, then I think it behooves other members to support any such member in seeking a decision. I do not wish to go into the ramifications of this particular member's problem. It is a very simple matter. He is raising a question in respect of building on waterlots, which obviously comes within the terms of the Navigable Waters Protection Act for which the Minister of Public Works is responsible. No decision has been made in this case. No permit was issued for the work, although the operation is taking place, nor

was a permit refused on the ground that this type of work could not be done.

I do not know how the other members from Toronto feel about the matter but it seems to me that every member from the city of Toronto should be interested. I know Toronto to be a very homogeneous city where workers work in one section and live in another and the Toronto members represent a conglomeration of people. I would think there would be some joint responsibility for the waterfront of the city and that it would behoove all members from that city to take collective action in this matter which seems to affect not only Etobicoke but also Long Branch, Toronto Island Airport and many other areas on the waterfront.

I do not like to ask the Minister of National Revenue to make any commitment because I think he has made as much of a commitment as he can. He is not responsible for the department. However, I do know that the departmental officials are aware that in a very short time these accounts will appear in the public accounts but in the meantime they are going to be held up.

I would suggest it is in the interest of all members of the Department of Public Works to clean up this matter. I suggest that this item is not going to pass today and so far as I am concerned it is not going to pass for some time. I am quite prepared to help the hon. member carry on a filibuster for a number of days if necessary to see that he gets an answer. This may be quite unreasonable, Mr. Chairman, but I have listened to the same argument a number of times and have heard no logical explanation why the Navigable Waters Protection Act has not been enforced and why an answer is not given.

Frankly I could not care much less whether we have changed the policy and are now going to allow the filling in of waterfront lots and thereby obtain new land. We are doing this in Montreal where we are building Expo on that type of site. As a matter of principle I am not objecting to the filling in of waterfront lots. But I do think the act is very specific in respect of the responsibility belonging to the Minister of Public Works, and to slough off the matter as has been done in a number of discussions is not in the interest of the operation of parliament and certainly is not giving a fair deal to the people of the riding concerned.