

Supply—Public Works

he knows it perfectly well—why we did not do a great many of these things when we were in office. We did not do many of these things when we were in office because we felt that only the most essential building should be done at a time when there was a great private building boom, and that the government should not be competing with other builders in bidding up the cost of building. It was felt that there were a considerable number of these projects that were not of the first urgency, though they were important and urgent, which should be carried on as soon as they were needed in order to maintain the level of construction and the level of employment in construction.

There is no doubt that one of the reasons the minister's department was able to spend 97 per cent of its allotment this past year is that unhappily there has been, as we all know, some decline in private construction, especially latterly, and it was therefore somewhat easier to get on with some of these works than it was at a time when it was hard to find architects, hard to get engineers, and hard to get on with many of these projects about which we all know something.

The minister made a reference in my absence, which I found very touching, to the Wesleyville post office.

Mr. Green: It is started.

Mr. Pickersgill: Yes; I know the Wesleyville post office is started, but unhappily a year later than it would have been started if a certain event had not taken place on June 10 of last year.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Green: What ingratitude.

Mr. Pickersgill: I am not ungrateful; indeed, I am extremely grateful to the minister for reluctantly and belatedly going ahead with this project. But during the election campaign my opponent, a very distinguished Newfoundlander, promised that he would have this building built. He did not say he would have it built whether he was elected or not; I will be fair. He said he would have it built. He also said he would have a post office built at Badger's Quay. If the rumours I heard in Newfoundland are correct the minister is going ahead with that project, and I congratulate him upon that fact too.

Mr. Green: You may make me change my mind.

Mr. Pickersgill: During the election campaign when I was in Wesleyville I happened to come across the plans and blueprints for the building at Wesleyville, and they were dated May, 1957. They were all ready for the calling of tenders at that time, but the

whole matter was delayed until the autumn and then all through the winter. It was an open winter and the building could have been built, and we could have been getting ahead with the Badger's Quay building this year if the plans had not been delayed. However, as the minister has said, I must not be ungrateful and I am very grateful that he is going ahead with it now. I will be even more grateful for the building at Badger's Quay.

Before his estimates have passed through committee I intend to give the minister the names of four or five other places in my riding where postal revenues are roughly equivalent to those at Wesleyville, Badger's Quay and Glovertown—where the previous government built a very good building—so the minister will have something to add to his shelf.

I would now like to say something about St. John's harbour, to which the minister also referred in his speech on a couple of occasions. I would first like to point out a contradiction which perhaps the minister himself did not realize. At page 902 of *Hansard* for June 6, in the second column, the minister said the following:

The Liberal government had had a report on a harbour project for St. John's and did nothing about it. Now we have \$1 million in the estimates this year.

Then at page 904 the minister said:

The total amount of the St. John's, Newfoundland harbour development, \$12 million, is not in the estimates. I pointed out that \$1 million was in the estimates. The point I am making is simply that in most cases, if not in every case, these works would not have been proceeded with this year under ordinary circumstances, but in order to make work the government is going ahead with them.

The minister says in one place that the Liberals did nothing about it and implies that we ought to have done something about it, and in the next place, within the same half hour, the minister says he would not have gone ahead with it either if there were ordinary circumstances, and the only reason he is going ahead is to provide employment under the unusual circumstances which have developed since October last. Even the Minister of Public Works cannot have it both ways.

The fact of the matter is, of course, that this St. John's harbour development—and I give the minister full credit for his part in this development—was undertaken by Mr. Winters on his own personal initiative and I well remember going across the harbour in a boat with him when he pointed out the foreshore and indicated the kind of ideas he thought ought to be developed there. This is very well known in St. John's. At every stage this development has been