

*Supply—Public Works*

and I have often been concerned about what has motivated the government in some of its actions in administering this vast department. For example, I note that each year for the last three years we spent \$180,000 in improving wharves. We have also done some dredging for Canadian Vickers at Montreal. Canadian Vickers is a worthy industry. I ask the minister, why are some wharves and some drydocks improved while others are neglected?

Two years ago when I was in Vancouver with the agricultural committee I saw how dilapidated the dock facilities were. Recently the port at Vancouver has become one of our major ports through which goods are exported from Canada. Yet I found buildings there which were, as people say in western Canada, as old as the hills. The dredging going on in the harbour was 20 years behind the times. What most concerned me was the lack of an over-all plan for the building of larger facilities at that port to enable the movement of a greater volume of commodities.

Without doubt, the attention of western Canada is focused on Vancouver as a port of export. Hon. members no doubt are aware of the serious situation in western Canada at the terminals and in government elevators. I know that terminal elevators need not necessarily come under the Department of Public Works. Yet when talking about port facilities one must include terminal elevators, and in western Canada we have been worried for the past month because these elevators have not worked at full capacity. They work five days a week and less than 24 hours a day.

We all realize that if the government, and particularly the Department of Public Works, showed a greater interest in this matter they would bring about modernization of port facilities and facilitate the handling of Canadian products. Those products, of course, include grain coming from the terminals and from the dryers. Of course, many realize that one of our bottlenecks in grain has been in drying it. Dryers operate in the terminals. If grain has to be dried elevator companies sometimes do not know where to put it. They have no place to put it. Surely the solution of this problem has something to do with the Department of Public Works and the operations of the department with regard to improving harbour facilities, dredging, and facilitating the movement of Canadian products to export markets.

I could not bring myself to admit when I toured the port of Vancouver, and the Lakehead shortly after, that the facilities I saw

were modern or that the dredging operations at Vancouver, particularly, were up to date. I could only conclude that we are behind the times. It was realized that Asia was a gigantic market and that we should streamline our port facilities to accommodate that market. But we were late. And we have had to pay the price for allowing our harbour facilities to fall behind.

● (4:20 p.m.)

We hear a great deal nowadays from the Minister of Transport about the government's intention to build a brand new port on a sandy peninsula. The minister has not told us how he proposes to stop the sand drifting in without continual dredging. He has not told us whether the legal situation between the federal government and the province has been ironed out. With present pressure on the shipment of Canadian products, whether they be potash, iron ore or grain, surely there is urgent need to iron out the red tape and speed up the modernization of our port facilities and the development of new ones.

Looking over this year's estimates I find very little change in the total expenditure compared with last year. There is an increase of some \$11 million. No real savings have been made in any of the items. There is really just a continuation of programs which have not proven to be particularly successful in the past. No consideration has apparently been given to the change which has taken place in the pattern of Canadian exports particularly from the Lakehead and the west coast. We see the United States taking advantage of our harbour facilities at Baie Comeau, for example, while we are failing to keep abreast of our leading export competitor. This should be brought sharply to the attention of the government.

One could go into the whole question of grain drying and grain drying facilities at these harbours. They have not proved good enough. A few years ago when the question of grain dryers on prairie farms was raised Mr. McNamara, chief commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board, advised against farmers purchasing dryers on account of the danger of damaging the quality of Canadian wheat. Yet today, because of failure to handle the massive amounts of damp grain on the prairies, Mr. McNamara is urging farmers to get into the business of drying their own grain. He has thrown his caution of a few years ago to the winds and has said in effect: Get into the business because the government cannot handle the 380 million bushels of