

Supply—Public Works

submitted to Ottawa blueprints for the repair, reconstruction and addition of a cage to the wharf at Ile-aux-Coudres. But no amount has been allotted yet in this year's estimates for improvement.

The minister may not be aware of it—but the members of the Quebec area know it—that for the last few years, Ile-Aux-Coudres has pre-eminently become a touristic ground. During the last four months, the provincial government has made available a ferryboat for tourists who come to visit the fine riding of Charlevoix. This ferryboat has been completely full during the tourist season in spite of all kinds of difficulties she has had to face to moor alongside the wharf of Ile-Aux-Coudres. I shall pester the minister until I know what happened to the plans and specifications that were prepared by the engineers of his department for the reconstruction of that wharf, which I feel is urgently needed for navigation.

The hon. minister must be aware that Charlevoix is a seamen's riding. There are numerous boat owners who need harbour facilities to carry on with their work. Since 1965, it seems that the seamen of my riding, my constituents, are being penalized for having voted conservative. We are in the dark ages! The necessary maintenance work is not even done to keep the wharfs in proper condition.

Therefore, I am giving the minister fair warning: until I obtain the required information regarding the Ile-aux-Coudres wharf—I know the minister will seek that information—I shall keep at him about it.

The department seemed to indicate that since l'Ile-aux-Coudres and Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive were a continuation of the highway, it was the responsibility of the province to build and maintain the wharf. However, if this is the policy of the Minister of Public Works, I should like him to tell the house about it. Therefore, I ask him, if he has time, to make enquiries in order to provide me with the information I requested during this debate.

Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier, the Department of Public Works is an important department, since it is responsible for the distribution of the taxpayers' money in the ridings along the Saint-Lawrence River, where navigation takes place.

For some years now, as I have said before, the province of Quebec has been discriminated against with regard to the appropriations to that province for the purpose of improving our harbour facilities.

[Mr. Asselin.]

I hope that the honorable minister will take notice of my remarks and I am expecting his answer.

[English]

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Chairman, I shall try to act like the good Conservative I am by being conservative in respect of debating time, because I know there are quite a few hon. members who wish to take part in the debate.

First of all I should like to say that the minister's statement was impressive for its brevity. I wish also to pay a compliment to the officials of the minister's department in St. John's, Newfoundland. I listened with great attention to the minister's reference to the decentralization of the Department of Public Works. This is a step in the right direction. When I say this, you can rest assured that the work of the department, at least in St. John's, Newfoundland, is in very good hands in the persons of Messrs. Knight, Whelan and Butler. I have had occasion to talk to these gentlemen, and I may say that I hope the kind of attitude I found prevalent in talking to them is also the attitude of the new minister. I am sure it is. I hope the minister will enhance the very good relations we already have.

The estimates of this department, of course, are always of great interest to parts of Canada such as the Atlantic region because, as my colleague pointed out a minute ago, this is one area where the taxpayer gets little return from his heavy taxation. Quite a change is taking place in the various departments in areas such as regional development, fisheries, post offices, and so on. I am aware that many of these programs, which will be co-ordinated by the Minister of Public Works, must be co-ordinated in co-operation with the various other government departments. We would not like to see tabled in the interim the projects which we hope will materialize in the Atlantic region, before the necessary formal restructuring takes place.

Sometimes governments are apt to become so taken up in the restructuring or setting up of the framework of departments that they forget to govern at all. I hope this will not be an accusation which can be made about this department. I have noticed with some dismay the reductions in the expenditures under the Department of Public Works specifically as they relate to the province of Newfoundland. I notice, for example, that in the fiscal year