

Supply—Transport

(Translation):

Mr. Deschatelets: Mr. Chairman, I followed with a great deal of interest the statement made last Saturday by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Balcer) in introducing the estimates of his department. He did fail to mention a number of subjects and problems of particular interest to the city and port of Montreal, and I shall deal briefly with that in a few moments.

However, I should like first to comment on the program of assistance to shipping and shipbuilding which the minister announced last Friday. In reply to a question put to him on Saturday the minister indicated that in order to provide the funds needed to implement this scheme, the government would resort to the rather unusual method of including an item in the estimates instead of introducing legislation. Furthermore, it would not be an ordinary item, but according to the minister's own admission, a \$1 estimate. I feel this is a rather unusual procedure and that such action on the part of the government is to be regretted. Such an attitude is contrary to the procedure traditionally followed in the case of such important subsidies. In any event, I do hope that this scheme will fulfil the aims of the minister and the government in relation to employment and to the restoration of Canadian shipbuilding.

In fact, I use the word "restoration" purposely, because one of the most important shipbuilding firms, Canadian Vickers Limited, is located in my constituency.

In the matter of assistance to shipbuilding, it was about time that the government woke up, because everyone knows that since 1957, the situation has been seriously deteriorating.

Reference was made to that fact in *Le Devoir* of Saturday, May 13, on the basis of information found in the *Canada Year Book*. The paper mentioned that in 1957 there were more than 68 shipyards giving jobs to 18,417 people and paying up to \$71 million in salaries with a commercial production estimated at \$167 million.

And *Le Devoir* added:

Since 1957, several companies had to close down, and those which stood up and were not stifled reduced the number of their employees by half.

I therefore hope that the several hundred people in my riding who were dismissed from those shipyards since 1957 will be able to find some work again after a four year interruption.

Mr. Chairman, as the representative of a Montreal riding, I had hoped that the minister

would mention various significant projects about which we are always pressing him during the question period, on the orders of the day. It seems to me that this was a good opportunity for the minister to let us know the position of the government with regard to various quite important projects and issues concerning the city of Montreal and the south shore. I mean more particularly the construction of a bridge to the east of Montreal, improvements to the port of that city, projects for making use of properties belonging to the Canadian National Railways along the river, construction of an east-west elevated roadway, financial assistance in relation to that improvement as well as other questions with which I shall deal more fully later on.

Let us deal, first of all, with the matter of a bridge in the east of Montreal. Hon. members will remember that we, of the Liberal party, have been advocating this project since 1955 and that at that time, it was being necessarily delayed by the St. Lawrence seaway work and by the beginning of the Champlain bridge project.

On several occasions, namely on March 9, 1959, and on August 29, 1958, as well as in previous years, I have referred to this project for the east of Montreal. My colleague the hon. member for Hochelaga (Mr. Eudes) has also taken every opportunity of dealing with this matter. And now in 1961, after four years under Conservative government, no progress has been made since 1957, even though the situation has changed a great deal; the seaway is completed and work on the Champlain bridge was started a long time ago. In addition, if I am not mistaken, during the last election, all Conservative candidates of the island of Montreal, as well as the hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm (Mr. Pigeon) and the Associate Minister of National Defence (Mr. Sevigny), had put this project to the foreground of their platform.

Mr. Pigeon: Which project?

Mr. Deschatelets: The project of building a bridge in the east of Montreal. If my memory serves me well, the member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm had even asked that this bridge, or one of its approaches, be located in his riding.

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I made that request in this house and not during an election campaign.

Mr. Dupuis: There is no question of privilege.