

*Supply—Public Works*

I could add that to my surprise an outstanding newspaper of the capital city wrote in an editorial one day the following words:

In these days of budget fever when everyone is an economist and talks knowingly about the gross national product and the impact of taxes, it is heartening to find one department of government with its feet on the ground. This is the Department of Public Works, which has no public relations branch, makes few statements, and gets on with its job of building. The works department puts up office buildings, fine new laboratories, dredges harbours, builds breakwaters, wharves and jetties, and in general keeps the physical side of government in sound running condition.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Mutch:** You asked for that.

**Mr. Green:** Mr. Chairman, I hope the minister does not really believe that he and his department are that good.

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** Well, the paper says so.

**Mr. Green:** I am sure he does not believe everything that he reads in the paper. The minister has mentioned some little blue report in which we can find out everything that has been happening in his department. I have been trying to get that blue report ever since the house opened in January, but I have not been able to get it yet. I sent down today for the annual report of his department and the one that came up was for the period ending March 31, 1951.

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** 1952.

**Mr. Green:** No, 1951.

**Mr. Graydon:** You had better look that one up.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** It will turn out yet that he wrote the editorial.

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** My office tells me that there is some misunderstanding. We did file the 1952 report, and it is the one for 1953 that has not come to us to date.

**Mr. Green:** This may be proof that the minister needs a public relations office.

**Mr. Mutch:** You should be the last to suggest that.

**Mr. Green:** In any event I was unable to get the report of the department for the fiscal year 1951-52 and, that being so has made it a little awkward to prepare any sort of a statement for the first item of the minister's estimates. I would hope that he could furnish us with a copy of that report before very long. Even if we do get it, it will only cover a period which expired over a year ago. So, whatever other good points there may be about the department, I am afraid that the little blue book is not one of them.

The minister will remember that when his estimates were under discussion about a year

[Mr. Fournier (Hull).]

ago we raised the point of other departments undertaking public works which we thought should have been done by the Department of Public Works. Our criticisms were based, of course, on the report by the standing committee on finance of the Senate which was dated June 23, 1952. In that report there was one very important paragraph dealing with the Department of Public Works, reading as follows:

The growing practice for other departments of government to by-pass public works department and build up little public works branches of their own, should cease, and all such work placed in charge of the public works department, where the law intended it should be.

That was one of the recommendations of this committee of the Senate; and it was based on the fact that various other departments of government have their engineering staffs and have been doing a good deal of building. As I read the findings of the Senate committee they argue or contend that in the fiscal year 1951-52 there was as much money spent by other departments of government, as was spent by the Department of Public Works itself.

In looking at the summary of standard objects of expenditure and special categories, which was tabled with our estimates for the fiscal year 1953-54, I find that this same condition still exists. In other words, about half the money spent for buildings and works, including land, by departments other than those concerned with war preparations, was spent by departments other than the Department of Public Works. We find very heavy expenditures for the construction or acquisition of buildings and works.

For example, the Department of Agriculture will spend over \$11 million; the Department of Citizenship and Immigration over \$4.5 million. This is for the construction or acquisition of buildings and works. In addition to these expenditures, of course, there are the expenditures for repairs and upkeep of buildings and for building rentals. At the moment I am only referring to the expenditures for construction and acquisition of buildings and works. The Department of External Affairs will spend over \$1,300,000; the Department of Fisheries nearly \$360,000; the Department of Justice, through the commissioner of penitentiaries, nearly \$1 million; the Department of National Health and Welfare, over \$1,300,000; the national research council and atomic energy control board, nearly \$6 million; the Department of National Revenue, over \$1 million; the Department of Resources and Development, over \$4,200,000; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, over \$3,700,000; the Department of Transport, nearly \$30 million; the national harbours board,