

Unemployment Continuance Act

Mr. SANDERSON: Then I take it that tenders were not advertised; is that right?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): I think they were in some cases; I could not say offhand.

Mr. SANDERSON: When tenders were not advertised how did the department arrive at a decision as to who should carry on the work?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): I have told my hon. friend that the course which has been followed for years was adopted in these cases. The architect in charge of maintenance would communicate with the different tradesmen in the particular town who were interested in that kind of work, and they would be asked to tender for the work. There might be some small expenditure where that course was not adopted, but we are carrying on with the same staff and following the same methods—and they are good methods—for getting this work done reasonably, efficiently, promptly and in the public interest.

Mr. SANDERSON: I quite understand what the minister says as to what was done formerly, but this work is being done under rather different circumstances. This is unemployment relief, and while the minister did not say so I presume he meant that the sitting member for the constituency, if he were a government supporter, recommended a certain firm or firms to do the work, and that where a Liberal member sat for the constituency the defeated candidate made the recommendation. Is that correct?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): No, you are not absolutely right in that.

Mr. SANDERSON: Am I partly right?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): I do not know whether you are or not because the architect is quite free to get tenders wherever he thinks proper and wherever he thinks he can get the best results.

Mr. SANDERSON: Is he an architect employed by the department or is he an outside architect?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): He is an architect in the department in charge of maintenance work.

Mr. SANDERSON: I will put the question directly to the minister, and I will accept his word because I have a good deal of faith in him. He absolutely took precaution and care to keep politics out of the expenditure of unemployment relief money. Is that correct?

[Mr. H. A. Stewart.]

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): I would say that political considerations were not the dominating considerations in the administration of public relief.

Mr. SANDERSON: Was politics a factor to some extent?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): I will say to my hon. friend that under equal considerations and with equal advantage to the public interest, if I can find a supporter of this government who will do the work for the price at which an opponent of the government will do it, the supporter of the government will get the work.

Mr. SANDERSON: Then I should like to direct another question to the minister. What does he mean by "equal considerations"?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): I do not know that I should be subjected to cross-examination by my hon. friend, but I meant at equal cost to the public and with equally good results.

Mr. SANDERSON: The minister need not get sensitive. I want to tell him that if I desire to examine him or cross-examine him I am going to do so, and there is no reason why I should not. The minister has drawn that remark from me by his own attitude. I want to be courteous to the minister and I expect him to be courteous to me as a member of this house. If I desire to put certain questions to the minister I propose to do so, unless the chairman rules me out of order and says my questions are not proper.

Now I want to ask something further. I see in the report of the director of relief an amount of \$67,000 authorized for the Haileybury breakwater and harbour for seaplanes. The amount expended to February 29, 1932, was \$17,809.84, and I want to ask the minister if he called for tenders for that work.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): No.

Mr. SANDERSON: In what way is the work being done?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): The work is being done under the supervision of the district engineers and under the immediate supervision of foremen appointed to carry it out.

Mr. SANDERSON: I directed a question to the Minister of Public Works with reference to this item when the estimates were up two or three weeks ago, and I believe I asked him then who had recommended that this work be done. Was it by petition? Was it