

Mr. BUREAU: That is not putting the case fairly. This position has been vacant for two and a half years, and the minister says that so long as he is Acting Minister of Public Works—which, for this country's sake, I hope will not be long—he will not fill this position. It looks to me as if the minister was quibbling. If he is going to appoint Mr. Wright let him do so and pay him \$4,000. Mr. Wright deserves that amount, and the country will be the gainer by it. But if the minister tries to get the additional vote for \$700 through the House by saying that he does not know who the new Minister of Public Works will be, I object to the item passing in that way. For the good of the Public Works Department, Mr. Wright ought to be appointed to this position. The minister should not be taking any risk in saying that he will see Mr. Wright gets this money if the vote is passed. The only conclusion we can come to, from his not giving us that assurance, is that he has no intention of appointing Mr. Wright.

Mr. REID: The item was put in the Estimates by the late Minister of Public Works, with the intention of bringing Mr. Wright back to Ottawa. I am merely acting temporarily until some new minister is appointed. That new minister may say that he prefers leaving Mr. Wright where he is.

Mr. GRAHAM: Have you any idea who the new minister will be? We might then be able to judge whether he would appoint Mr. Wright.

Mr. REID: I am sure it will not be the hon. member, because he is on the wrong side of the House.

Mr. GRAHAM: Not necessarily, judging by the events of the past few weeks.

Mr. REID: I think those events show that the hon. member will be on that side for some time to come. If he feels there is any danger of Mr. Wright not getting this money I have no objection to having the item struck out, if he will move accordingly.

Mr. NESBITT: If the minister is going to be Acting Minister of Public Works for only a short time, it seems to me only reasonable that this matter should be left to the incoming minister, who will no doubt take into consideration what was intended by the outgoing minister. I do not know whether Mr. Wright will be appointed or not, but if this salary is required to get a proper man to fill the position, I would pass the item.

[Mr. J. D. Reid.]

Mr. BUREAU: The minister knows what the intention of the former minister was. There must be some correspondence between the department and Mr. Wright. The minister can easily find out from his deputy whether any negotiations have been going on, how far they have gone, and whether or not Mr. Wright has agreed to accept. Has Mr. Wright agreed to come back if this \$4,000 is voted?

Mr. REID: The late Minister of Public Works valued Mr. Wright's services and found him, as I have always found him, willing to go any place or to do anything in connection with the work of the department that the minister wished him to do.

Mr. BUREAU: That is not answering my question.

Mr. REID: This item was put in the Estimates by the late Minister of Public Works for the purpose of bringing Mr. Wright back to Ottawa, Mr. Wright being agreeable to coming if the minister desired. My hon. friend must see that the new minister might decide not to fill this position until the war is over, and in the meantime leave Mr. Wright where he is. On the other hand he may decide to bring Mr. Wright back to Ottawa, and then we should require this vote. Or he might desire the services of Mr. Wright at some other point at a larger salary. I cannot commit the new minister any further than that. I am not going to fill the position, but am leaving it to the new minister. I think under the circumstances this item should go through.

Mr. MACDONALD: Is there any necessity for filling a position in the Public Works Department which has been vacant for the last two and a half years? We are told by the Government that they are not putting up any new public buildings this year. Consequently, no new architectural work will be required. If the Government really desire to economize here is an excellent opportunity.

Mr. REID: The deputy minister tells me that Mr. Wright has been recommended to the Civil Service Commission for this appointment. The matter has also been before the Treasury Board, so that Mr. Wright could be appointed. But I repeat I do not want to waste any time on it, and if there is any objection to it I will strike it out.

Public works—chargeable to capital. Public buildings—Ottawa eastern departmental block—new fireproof roof, etc., revote, \$125,000.

Mr. REID: This money is to be applied towards the fireproofing of the old portion