

Supply—Resources and Development

99 employees. The estimate last year was 122 and this year it is 141. The expenditure has gone down \$1 million instead of going up.

Mr. Winters: Mr. Chairman, this department has been shorthanded for some time. We have been attempting to put our engineering work into better shape before contracts are let. It had been the practice in many instances to let contracts in national parks on some basis such as cost plus a fixed fee because the engineering staff simply was not available to undertake the necessary surveys to let contracts on a fixed cost basis. We are now making every attempt to get around that situation and develop our engineering staff to the point where engineering details and drawings can be made available before tenders are called so that contracts can be let on a fixed basis.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): Have you let any contracts this year?

Mr. Winters: We have let some contracts this year.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): Have they been let on a fixed cost basis or cost plus?

Mr. Winters: The contracts that have been called have been firm contracts in a sense but only in a sense. They have not been let on the basis of actual unit costs for quantities. They have been let on the basis of a firm price for fees and a firm price for rentals of the equipment involved, which is one of the big items in any road building contract.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): You have not stated they have been on a fixed cost basis.

Mr. Winters: No, I did not.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): Because we have been told in the public accounts committee that is a very rare thing.

Mr. Winters: The contracts let this year were, as I said, on the basis of a fixed fee plus fixed rentals for the equipment used in carrying out the contracts.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): Can you say how many employees you have now in that division?

Mr. Winters: I am told that the number is a few less than the 141 shown in the estimates because there have been some transfers recently.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): You have some vacancies now.

Mr. Winters: That is right.

Mr. Fulton: As I understand it this amount is for work in the national parks. Why is it not included under the general item for

administration of the national parks for convenience of reference, or do they do other general work for the department as well?

Mr. Winters: They do other general work as well, especially in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. Perhaps I should read the explanation I have before me. The total increase is due mainly to (a) the inclusion of provision for general salary revisions and statutory increases; (b) provision for new positions and additional equipment, services, supplies, et cetera, as a result of the increased activities of the services required to cope with the expanded improvement and development program in the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and the national parks; (c) the constantly increasing price level which affects every service and commodity required in the administration of the various functions of the service.

Mr. Hodgson: Under temporary assistance there is an increase of about \$60,000 over last year. The amount for temporary assistance is more than twice that for permanent positions. Can you explain that situation?

Mr. Winters: It is the practice of the department to hire most of these people on a temporary basis and hire them later on a permanent basis if they prove satisfactory. I think that is a common practice. At the present time there is a large percentage of temporary assistants.

Mr. Hodgson: That would be for summer work?

Mr. Winters: Most of it is for summer work.

Item agreed to.

Stony Rapids—Black lake road—

381. Contribution to the cost of constructing a mining road between Stony Rapids and Black lake in Saskatchewan in accordance with the terms of an agreement to be entered into between Canada and the province of Saskatchewan (revote), \$12,500.

Mr. Drew: Mr. Chairman, under what statute is this item provided?

Mr. Winters: It is not a statute. It is a vote of parliament which enables this work to be done.

Mr. Drew: There is no covering statute?

Mr. Winters: No.

Mr. Drew: What is the agreement that is referred to?

Mr. Winters: It is an agreement between the government of Saskatchewan and the government of Canada for the carrying out of this work.