

*Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys*

**Some hon. Members:** Carried.

**The Chairman:** Shall vote 760 carry?

**Mr. Chevrier:** No, Mr. Chairman, I want an answer to my question.

**Some hon. Members:** Carried.

**Mr. Chevrier:** I think I am entitled—

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** Was the hon. member going to ask something?

**Mr. Chevrier:** No. I was going to insist on an answer.

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** There are no commitments. I have made inquiry and I am informed that there is no commitment but that one of these companies has gone so far with this program that it will be in financial difficulties if we do not take advantage of this opportunity.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** But that is not the only reason. This is very good business for the government. We wish to see this work carried on and we wish to take advantage of the opportunity which has been presented to us.

I was asked earlier how the contracts with these companies were entered into. The main contract with these companies was arrived at by tender, but certain changes were negotiated in relation to photography in the Arctic archipelago. The contract to date involves certain payments. This present item will permit payments to the Spartan company of \$1,325,000, and the photographic surveys company, \$735,000. The balance of the item now submitted is for photography still to be examined and approved. The third company, Aero Surveys, has some work done but they did not participate to the extent that the other two companies did in the accelerated program.

**Mr. Chevrier:** Mr. Chairman, it follows from the answer which the minister has given that work has been ordered and commitments have been made to the extent of \$1,325,000 for Spartan and \$735,000 for Aero Surveys. If that is the case, then it looks to me as if there has been a commitment without an appropriation by parliament, and I therefore come back to my earlier question. I asked the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources a question, and I did not direct it to the Minister of Finance because the Minister of Finance is not a member of the interdepartmental committee. The Minister of Finance told me a moment ago that the three members of the interdepartmental committee on this committee were the Minister of Mines and

[Mr. Chevrier.]

Technical Surveys, the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources and the Minister of National Defence.

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** No, I did not say "ministers". I said that they were the three departments which were represented on the committee.

**Mr. Chevrier:** That is quite right; I stand corrected to that extent, that the departments of mines, northern affairs and defence were members of this committee. Surely the minister who is sitting in his seat and who represents the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, and who is a member of that committee, is in a position to answer the question which I asked a moment ago? The question I asked was this: When the minister made his answer to me that there was no commitment, does he mean there was no document of any kind exchanged between any of these three companies and the government?

**Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle):** Mr. Chairman, if this will make the hon. member for Laurier any happier, there is an interdepartmental committee and we discuss policy matters of this sort; but I know nothing of any exchange of documents. I imagine they would be handled by the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys if there were.

**Mr. Dumas:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Finance has insisted on trying to tell the committee that the government will make some saving by having this done much earlier than it was supposed to be done. I understand this is done under contract and the companies will be paid the same amount as if they had taken six years to do the job, so there are no savings by the government. I noticed in the minutes of the standing committee on mines, forests and waters that there was a question put on page 195 of the report of the meeting of Monday, March 16 last, by one member in regard to this item as follows:

—you mean that 50 per cent of the contract is completed?

We were told that 50 per cent of the contract was completed, so Mr. Pack of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys said:

Speaking generally, but not for each company. Generally speaking, 50 per cent is completed. It was considered as to whether or not we should hold the companies to the six-year plan or whether in view of the success which they had had we should take a more realistic approach.

As a result, we have now amended the contracts officially. It is our hope that the government will see fit to provide us with a rather large supplementary estimate by the end of this month