

Supply—Public Works

types of municipal charges included in the vote? It seems to be a heavy supplementary vote for payments of that type.

Mr. Abbott: Yes. The total payments, as provided in the estimates, were \$1,550,000. The supplementary vote required here is \$227,000, or roughly 15 per cent.

Mr. Green: Is the department paying any new type of charges to the municipalities?

Mr. Abbott: Not that I know of. This covers general charges. They would be service charges. They would not be taxes, of course. They would be water rates or charges for light, power or something like that.

Item agreed to.

Acquisition, construction and improvements of public buildings—

Construction, acquisition, major repairs and improvements of, and plans and sites for, public buildings listed in the details of the estimates, provided that treasury board may increase or decrease the amount within the vote to be expended on individual listed projects—further amounts required—

597. Quebec (\$420, less the amount of \$419 available from savings in other listed projects detailed in previous estimates for 1953-54 for this province), \$1.

Mr. Green: This is another one of the \$1 items. The description makes it appear as though there is \$420 required to build a public building, that the department had on hand, in the Quebec vote for buildings, \$419, so they now just want \$1. That seems almost too good to be true.

Mr. Abbott: This is a real economy measure, Mr. Chairman. It was contemplated that a new public building would be erected in Huntingdon and an appropriate item was put in the estimates to prepare plans and acquire a site. Then on re-examination of the situation it was found that it would be satisfactory to extend the present building. The vote which was originally there to prepare plans and so on is sufficient to do that, but of course that does not authorize the doing of it. This item of \$1 is to give statutory authorization to do that.

Mr. Green: The vote in the present fiscal year, I think, was \$25,000.

Mr. Abbott: That is right.

Mr. Green: Just how do we get from the \$25,000 to \$420, then to \$419 and then to the \$1?

Mr. Abbott: The \$1 is merely to give statutory authorization to use the \$25,000 item for this extension. The \$25,000 was an initial item of an estimated cost of \$100,000. It now looks as though we shall get a satisfactory

public building in Huntingdon for certainly not more than the \$25,000 required for this extension. As I said, an amount of \$25,000 was provided in the 1953-54 main estimates towards the cost of constructing a new customs building at Huntingdon, province of Quebec, at a preliminary estimated cost of \$100,000. Subsequent to the request from customs for this new building, the Post Office Department advised that they would require an additional 1,071 square feet. Having this in mind, and the fact that the operating and maintenance costs on one building are considerably lower than on two, it was decided to construct an addition to the present public building to provide the necessary accommodation for both customs and post office.

Mr. Green: How much was this extension to cost?

Mr. Abbott: I do not know that I have the full data here.

Mr. Green: I still do not see how we get from \$25,000 to the \$420. The minister has not explained that.

Mr. Abbott: We will not get to the \$420. The only explanation I gave was that the \$25,000 in this vote for Huntingdon during this current fiscal year is not available legally for the construction of an extension to the existing building but only for the construction of a new building. We have started to extend the existing building and wish to use the \$25,000 voted for the cost of that new building towards the cost of that addition to the building.

Mr. Green: Why did they put in this figure of \$420?

Mr. Abbott: I thought we were discussing the \$1 item.

Mr. Knowles: X minus Y equals 1.

Mr. Abbott: Here it is. The note is to this effect. When the estimates were being prepared, on March 1, 1954, treasury board authority had not been obtained for the new contract. It is therefore anticipated that the expenditure of \$420 already made for survey and advertising will be the only charge against 1953-54 funds.

Mr. Green: Then the \$25,000 has already been spent?

Mr. Abbott: No.

Mr. Green: How much has been spent? Is it the amount \$419 or \$420 or \$1?

Mr. Abbott: I am afraid that I cannot give that information at the moment.