

Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act

the fact that you can get work started, say, on May 1 instead of on July 1, with the result that you can spend your money during the summer.

One of the most difficult things to do in western Canada is to get to work early in our short summers. We have only a six-months period within which to do this kind of work. When there is frost in it you cannot move earth to put in dams. If you do, your dam will mush in the spring and it will go out. In our section of the country you must move in a short period of time the earth to build dams. If, on a small \$7,000 or \$8,000 dam, you lose half of the time in getting it through all the red tape that you must go through where hundreds of thousands are spent, you will not get any of that work done during that summer; you will have to carry it over until the next one.

That is the reason for this provision, and there is no other reason. It is to get these works, which are essential to the carrying out of the whole program, proceeded with more rapidly than they could be proceeded with otherwise. It is just raising the amount from \$5,000, which was considered reasonable in all departments back in 1935, up to \$10,000, which is considered reasonable in all departments now.

Mr. Argue: I am not objecting to this change that will be brought about by the resolution and the bill when it is passed. Can the minister tell the committee, from the experience he has had over the last year or two, approximately, how many projects would come into the \$5,000 or \$10,000 class? How many projects is this provision likely to affect in a year? Will it affect one, one hundred, or two hundred? What will be the practical effect of the passing of this resolution?

Mr. Gardiner: I would be greatly surprised if it comes up to one hundred. I should not like to make guesses, because I can give the exact information when we get into the estimates. I think it will be found that it is not an unreasonable thing. It would not be provided for in all other departments if it were unreasonable; and if it is reasonable there, it is just as reasonable to have it here.

Mr. Knowles: For the purpose of information, may I ask the minister a question on what he has just said? I understood him to say that one of the reasons for raising this amount was the time which it takes to get these matters through council. He also made reference to the treasury board. May I ask the minister whether, when this resolution and the bill pass, it will mean that projects

under \$10,000 do not even have to be submitted to treasury board? Or do they still have to go there?

Mr. Gardiner: They go to treasury board, yes. The projects will go to treasury board on the minister's recommendation. But they do not have to go through the regular procedure of going through council.

Mr. Knowles: But they have to be approved by the treasury board?

Mr. Gardiner: They are submitted there for the purpose of determining whether there is money available, whether it is within the regulations, and so on.

Mr. Coldwell: But the decision in that event rests with the minister, as long as the appropriation is there?

Mr. Gardiner: Yes.

Mr. Coldwell: I think we are quite right in inquiring into this matter at this stage, because this measure, if passed, will enable the minister to deal with projects under \$10,000 in the way in which they are dealt with now under \$5,000. That is why we are asking these questions, and I think we should be set right about the matter.

Mr. Gardiner: That is exactly the situation.

Mr. Charlton: This bill has particular reference to the Palliser triangle, and the resolution particularly states that it is to provide for the appointment and superannuation of certain officers and employees. It has been stated that certain work has been done outside of the Palliser triangle. Can the minister tell us how many more employees, for instance, would have to be appointed than have been appointed in the past, in order to take care of work outside the Palliser triangle, and how much of this work outside of that triangle or in various other parts of the country has to do with the extra \$5,000, for instance, that the minister may spend without going before the governor in council?

Mr. Gardiner: Practically all the projects, if they became projects outside of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act, would not come under this provision at all. Projects outside of the P. F. R. A. are provided for under those separate votes that are found in my specials; that is, we put up \$200,000 on one thing, \$300,000 on another, and so on. The investigational work in connection with those projects is usually done by the engineers under P.F.R.A., and it is only their salaries that are charged up in connection with it. This has nothing to do with that. If we go outside to do these works, they come under the other votes, not under this one at all, and they would be considered from that point of view.