

may not be able to find any employment. In my opinion the policy of cutting down at this time is not right. Last year the former government undertook larger expenditures with a view to meeting the unemployment situation which then prevailed. Later on we had the special session of parliament when we passed further large appropriations to provide work. Now that we are in regular session, I should like to know whether the Minister of Public Works is in a position to inform the house whether the government has in contemplation a program of public works which will in some way take care of those who are unemployed at the present time.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): The suggestions of my hon. friend will be carefully considered. It must be borne in mind, however, that it is impossible, in preparing the estimates of the Public Works department, to foresee where unemployment will be acute.

An hon. MEMBER: Not this year.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): Oh, I don't know. And for that reason it is better, perhaps, to arrange for provision of funds to relieve unemployment where the funds are more fluid, where they can be expended to meet requirements as they develop. Unfortunately the consideration of public works by the Public Works department is rigidly limited to the particular estimate for a particular place; and, unfortunately also, it does not afford that measure of relief to a large number of unemployed that can be afforded by other works undertaken locally according to the emergency, as the municipality and the province approve, and in the prosecution of which they unite, thus very much increasing in this way the amount of money expended. As my hon. friend knows, the expenditure of the appropriation of twenty million dollars on the basis on which it was made last year resulted in a very much larger expenditure than that amount; whereas if we expend the money it is, as I have said, rigidly limited to the amount of the particular estimate and does not afford the relief which is sometimes so badly needed. However, my hon. friend's suggestion is very well worthy of consideration, and it will be carefully considered.

Mr. LAPOINTE: I desire to register my protest against the state of things revealed by the figures which the minister has given. I cannot understand the policy of the government in not spending the money which has been voted for public works in the province of Quebec. I am sorry that my colleagues in the house who represent the province of Quebec in the government are absent. I would call their attention particularly to this

[Mr. Heaps.]

fact. In 1930 there was voted for public buildings in the province of Quebec the sum of \$1,509,695, of which \$561,525 was spent, leaving unexpended \$948,170, or one-third of the money voted.

Mr. POWER: Two-thirds.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Yes, two-thirds. If there is added to the unexpended portion of the money voted for public buildings, the unexpended portion of the money voted for harbours and rivers, it will be found that it almost equals the total amount given to the province for the relief of unemployment. What kind of a policy is that? We were called to a special session of parliament to vote money to provide work for the people, but we find that the money which had been voted and which would have provided employment was left unexpended. I do not desire to draw a comparison but I find that in the case of the province of Ontario, so ably represented by the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Stewart) the amount voted for public works was \$2,679,350. That amount was practically all spent and I do not understand why there should be a difference in the treatment meted out to these two provinces. Why was not the money voted for public buildings in the province of Quebec spent in order to assist in the relief of unemployment?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): Mr. Chairman, I regret that my hon. friend has suggested that there has been discrimination in the expenditure of public moneys as between the two provinces. I can assure him that there was no intention to do anything of that kind.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Possibly.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): I can tell my hon. friend of two items voted for the province of Quebec which would account for over \$600,000 of the amount unexpended. One instance is the postal terminal for the city of Montreal, and if my hon. friend will go back to the year before I believe he will find that there was an item of \$500,000 in the estimates for that building, which was unexpended. My recollection is that there was another item of \$100,000 for an ordnance stores building in the city of Quebec which was not expended because the plans had not been completed, negotiations being still pending between the departments of National Defence and Public Works as to the location and type of building. Those two items call for over \$600,000 and there are good reasons why the moneys were not spent.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Will that last item of \$100,000 for an ordnance stores be expended?