

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): But I am assured that the usual routine of the office was followed, and part of that routine is to send every member a copy of such advertisements. As to the fact that no local tender was received, I do not know the reason for it all.

Mr. GIROUARD: Has a tender been accepted by the department?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): Yes, and the contract awarded to the lowest tenderer, which is our rule.

Mr. HEAPS: What was the amount?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): The amount was \$1,716.25.

Mr. GIROUARD: Was that the tender of Mr. Mercure, of Drummondville?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): Yes.

Mr. GIROUARD: I believe the minister will recognize that this state of affairs is not very satisfactory to the people of Victoriaville. Here is a building situated in a city with a population of almost 7,000 people. Tenders were called for but no advertisement was published in that city; the fact that tenders were being called for was not made known in any way to the people there. I am sure, therefore, that the people are perfectly justified in voicing a grievance. I think that the department should at least have advertised these tenders in Victoriaville. I have no objection to their having been advertised in the Canada Gazette; but as the minister will understand, that publication is not received by many people in Victoriaville. The fact that no one in that locality submitted tenders is a justification, in my opinion, of the position I am now taking. I submit that the minister should reconsider his acceptance of the successful tenders. He has a perfectly good reason for doing so. I urge upon him the re-opening of the matter and advertising in Victoriaville and Arthabaska. The people who should have known that tenders were being called for are the people living in Victoriaville, where the post office is situated, and I think the minister will recognize the soundness of this suggestion. I have no doubt he wishes to be fair to the people there, and he would be within his rights in cancelling the acceptance of an outside tender and having fresh tenders called for, so that the people of that place might have an opportunity of tendering.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): The order in council was passed on March 30, awarding the contract to the lowest tender, and it

would be impossible to cancel that contract now. It is not at all unusual to find local firms unsuccessful in securing these contracts; other firms seem to be specially equipped for this kind of work. I can assure my hon. friend, if it is any comfort to him, that regularly we find outside firms securing such contracts. I sympathize with him in his desire to have the people in his town get contracts, but it very seldom works out that way with respect to tenders.

Mr. GIROUARD: I am sure the minister wishes to be fair to everyone, and I think he will admit that my position is equally fair. There is a newspaper in Victoriaville, and three miles away, in Arthabaska, there is another newspaper published. Will the minister inform me whether these tenders were advertised in either of these newspapers.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): I can only say in reply that this is purely a matter of routine in the office, of which I have no personal knowledge. I have not a list of the papers in which the advertisement appeared, but I will get that information and see that it is supplied.

Mr. GIROUARD: Thank you.

Mr. HEAPS: The question I have already raised is far more important than a local matter; it affects practically every part of the Dominion, particularly the urban centres. Personally I feel that during a period of depression more than at any other time public authorities should spend large amounts on public works. It appears on this occasion, however, that this is reversed, and the policy seems to be one of practising economy, which, as I have said before, means that more people will be thrown out of employment. The question of the money spent last summer has really no relation to the estimates which are now before us. I know that in many of our large centres, where there are large numbers of men out of work, there is need for public buildings, and those buildings ought to be put up. Now is the time for the government to undertake the erection of these public buildings. I am thinking now particularly of buildings in the city of Winnipeg. We shall presently come to the estimates for the province of Manitoba, but under this item I think the same question might well be discussed. In Winnipeg public buildings are overdue, and at the present time there are vast numbers of men out of work. The federal government would be setting a good example to other public bodies if at this time they undertook the erection of these buildings in order to provide work for these men who otherwise