

Supply—Public Works

did about spending the proportion of the estimates he said had been spent. If by arbitrarily reducing the estimates by \$3 million, then the claim that they had spent 97 per cent of it would give a very different picture from the one the minister tried to give last Friday.

Mr. Green: There is no item in the estimates with respect to the Chignecto canal.

Mr. Pickersgill: Is the government doing anything about it?

Mr. Green: Well, it is under study. With regard to last year's estimates and the balance of which was covered by governor general's warrants, a discussion will come up I presume on the amendment to the Financial Administration Act, or at a later stage. It is not involved in these particular estimates.

Mr. Pickersgill: I am quite aware of that.

Mr. Green: There were certain amounts voted, certain monthly votes and that sort of business, so I am not in a position to give the exact situation.

Mr. Pickersgill: I think perhaps the minister would have been quite right if he had not raised the matter himself, but since he made the claim he has spent 97 per cent of last year's estimates I think the committee is entitled, before we pass this item, to be told what estimates he means. Is he talking about the estimates that were presented to parliament or the revised estimates the governor in council passed in secret after the election campaign was under way? It is a very simple question.

Mr. Green: The percentages I gave earlier in the afternoon were the correct percentages.

Mr. Pickersgill: Yes, but percentages of what?

Mr. Green: Percentages of the estimates.

Mr. Pickersgill: But of the estimates originally presented to parliament?

Mr. Green: It was 95 per cent, approximately, of the estimates as printed, and 97 per cent of the revised estimates.

Mr. Pickersgill: The minister is unaware of anything being done about the Chignecto canal?

Mr. Green: I told the hon. member that this situation was being studied.

Mr. Pickersgill: Could the minister indicate whether that is being done by his department or by whom?

Mr. Green: By the department.

Mr. Brooks: The hon. member shows great interest in it now, but he did not show too much a few years ago.

Mr. McIlraith: I have two questions to ask the minister. Before doing so, I hope I will not attract acrimonious comment from him when I tell him that I was very pleased to hear him acknowledge, in a wholehearted way, the merit of the civil service. I hope he will not deny me the pleasure of feeling that it is, to some extent at least, to the credit of the former government that they did leave a civil service of such calibre. I think that is fair comment.

The questions I wanted to ask him are these. With regard to the discussion a few moments ago about the public works department supervising the actual construction of all federal public buildings, could he tell the house as to whether or not any decision has been reached with respect to an administrative headquarters, presumably in Ottawa, for the C.B.C.? Could he say whether or not any decision has been reached as to whether such a building, when it is built, will be built under the supervision of the public works department or the C.B.C.

Mr. Green: We have nothing to do with that.

Mr. McIlraith: My point was as to the actual construction of the building, the supervision of the work. It was very much a lively topic of discussion in the past.

My next question has to do with the policy of the government concerning the placing of public buildings on the central experimental farm. I am one of those who considers it a very happy circumstance that we have, right in the heart of our Canadian capital, the very fine central experimental farm. The minister will recall that within the last few years the previous government announced a policy of putting no further public buildings on the lands of the central experimental farm, save and except such buildings as were directly related to the agricultural work being undertaken there. Could he give the house the policy of the present government in that respect?

Mr. Green: This really comes under a particular item of the estimates. Perhaps if we could get the general item through this afternoon, then I would be glad to deal with the question.

Mr. McIlraith: The information I wanted was as to the general policy of the government on that point. It is not on a particular item. I should like an answer. If the minister wants the subject discussed on a particular item, and if he will give an undertaking of