

Mr. COLDWELL: To what extent can this industry be expanded in Canada?

Mr. GARDINER: In eastern Canada it can probably be expanded. In western Canada the extent to which it can be expanded is limited by the consumption of beet sugar in that section of Canada. That is to say, sugar produced from beets in western Canada cannot economically be shipped out of western Canada. The only reason why they can be produced there notwithstanding the higher cost of production is the cost of freighting sugar in, sugar being a fairly heavy commodity. The last figures I recall, which may not be correct now, were that you could produce a ton of sugar beets in certain sections of Ontario for at least a dollar a ton less than in some sections of western Canada. Their production under irrigation in western Canada is possible because of the fact that it would cost too much to ship sugar out from the east.

Mr. COLDWELL: The point of my question was rather different. I was thinking of the possible necessity in the future of shifting the emphasis from one kind of crop to another, and I wondered how much room there is for the expansion of the sugar beet industry in Canada, that is, what proportion of our sugar consumption is produced from beets in Canada at the present time?

Mr. GARDINER: The whole question of tariffs and all that is involved. I should not like to state the extent to which you could increase the production of sugar in Canada.

Mr. COLDWELL: What percentage of our sugar consumption do we produce?

Mr. GARDINER: About fifteen per cent of our requirements.

If there are more questions I shall have to ask that this item stand.

Item stands.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

281. Departmental administration, \$190,415.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I see the staff is practically the same as it was before. Having regard to the fact that public works have been stopped, is there no opportunity to save some money here? I understand that the Department of Munitions and Supply has brought in quite a number of people from outside in connection with buildings being erected for war purposes in various parts of the country. Is any use being made of the departmental architects, engineers and other officials, or are we hiring people outside and charging their salaries under war appropriation,

[Mr. Gardiner.]

while our own officials, who are, I think, quite competent, are not being used?

Hon. P. J. A. CARDIN (Minister of Public Works): This item covers the expenditures of what may be called the main office. It provides more particularly for the minister's branch, the branch of the deputy minister and the assistant deputy minister, the secretary of the department, the purchasing agent and the private secretary's office. The number of employees under that vote is about the same as last year. There is no very great reduction in the estimate as far as employees are concerned. At present the employees of the department are well occupied because closing the contracts and completing the work started during last year and early this year require the work of a number of employees to ascertain to what extent the work had been done and to gather the information necessary to close out the contracts. Our people will be occupied in that work for a few months. Afterwards it may be that we could release their services to other departments. Although the Department of Public Works is not doing very much on its own account, we are doing certain works out of moneys transferred to us by the Department of National Defence, for example, and the Department of Trade and Commerce.

The research building was erected by the Public Works department out of moneys transferred from the Department of Trade and Commerce.

A committee has been set up, as the leader of the opposition knows, with the object of transferring to the new departments such officers and employees as have not sufficient work in their own departments, but so far as the Department of Public Works is concerned, few transfers have been made because up to the present we have required the services of our employees to complete and close out the contracts already undertaken. Practically all our officers and employees will be busy until the contracts are definitely closed.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Does that apply also to the engineers in the outside service? Nothing is being done now at the Halifax agency, for example, with the exception of repairs and that sort of thing. I do not think there are any big contracts under way there. Why could not some of those engineers be used? The point I wish to make is that here is a real chance for the government to exercise some economy. Two months of the fiscal year have gone by. Some time ago word came from the Minister of Finance to cut down these expenditures. I am serious about this; I am not asking these questions