

*Supply—Public Works*

**An hon. Member:** You had better be careful.

**Mr. Gillis:** I know the minister is always very co-operative and I know too that I like to accommodate him.

I would like to ask him if any recent representations have been made to his engineering branch in the matter of extending a wharf that exists in the city of Sydney and harbour, adjacent to the Dominion Atlantic Springs Company plant. I know that a request was made to me which I passed on to the minister's office; and I think the engineering branch had a visit from the owner and operator of the Dominion Atlantic Springs Company. I do not see anything in the estimates although I have looked for something on this, but if the minister can tell me he is giving consideration to the matter and that he might bring in a supplementary estimate later I will be quite satisfied to remain in my seat.

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** I am informed that we did receive representations. The gentlemen interested in that company paid a visit to the office of the chief engineer and the deputy minister. The answer we gave was that we would instruct our engineers to look into the matter and consider it. With respect to committing the department to recommend an estimate this year, I must say that I have not enough information before me. My hon. friend knows that I take all of these requests very seriously—meaning that if he has a good case then he can expect a good decision. If the case is not strong enough then I will have to see him and explain to him personally what we think of it.

**Mr. Gillis:** I am quite satisfied. No speech.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Was any report received by the department with regard to a wharf at Port Albert in the county of Huron?

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** I am told by my deputy minister that he cannot recall that we have had any request for a wharf at Port Albert. What is the population?

**Mr. Cardiff:** The population is not significant but has there been any consideration—

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** I can hardly discuss it at the moment.

**Mr. Cardiff:** It would be an exceptionally—

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** Now, listen; if you want some results give me the information you have and I will ask about the matter.

**Mr. Cardiff:** One of your engineers was up there and investigated the thing and I wondered whether he had put in a report to the department.

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** I will ask my engineers, but my deputy, who is a very learned man, does not know of it.

**Mr. Noseworthy:** I should like to ask a general question which applies to every branch of the minister's department. I should like to have an explanation of the reason for so many revotes, particularly in connection with the purchase and construction of public buildings. I have not had an opportunity of checking each province, but I have noticed that eight out of nine items listed under Newfoundland are revotes and amount to over \$500,000; nine out of fourteen items for Nova Scotia are revotes and amount to \$780,000; ten out of fifteen items for New Brunswick are revotes and amount to well over \$1 million. I noticed that for Quebec there is a total of thirty-one revotes amounting to close to \$5 million. What is the explanation for so many revotes? Was this money voted before the department was prepared to use the money or was more money voted than the department could make use of during the year? Is the minister asking for another \$5 million for Quebec this year more than he is going to be able to spend or is the minister going to spend all these revotes this year? It is an appropriate year for spending on public works.

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** Everything the hon. gentleman has said has some weight except the last remark. I am not impressed by that. To my knowledge revotes have existed in the Department of Public Works since that department was created. If you know about the construction business, even building your own home or putting buildings on your farm, you fix a date to complete your project. About 90 per cent of the time you do not complete the job on that date which you have fixed, and that is my experience in public works. When we start off, we get requests for wharves, buildings and so forth. These requests originate with the member, the mayor, boards of trade and so forth. These requests are studied by our officials and we make a decision. Then, we try to make an estimate of the cost and the time it will take to construct this work. We prepare our estimates in November and they are tabled in January. Generally they are voted in June. This year is an exception because we did start the session in November.

Now, in general, the vote is passed in the last days of the session and receives royal assent. Then, the staff in the office starts the plans for these buildings or wharves, and plans take time. Perhaps we have an amount of \$100,000 for that fiscal year and we spend perhaps \$60,000 or perhaps \$70,000. The