

*Supply—Public Works*

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** The main increases are all written down there. If my hon. friend looks at the architectural branch he will see that for maintenance and operation of public buildings in Ottawa there is an increase of \$830,000, and outside of Ottawa \$725,000. Then if he goes to building projects in the various provinces he will see that there is an increase of about \$4,686,000. In the other column you have the decreases. We would have to subtract them. I do not think I should take the time for that. It is easily calculated. That would be the net amount. There would be now a \$5,765,853 increase over last year. As we go along, when we meet these increases in the estimate book I will give a detailed explanation.

The third question you are asking is a real job for the department. You ask us to list all the contracts that were given by the department without calling for tenders. Well, we have hundreds and hundreds of contracts all over the country. I will give the hon. gentleman the place where he himself will get the information. It appears there.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** Do you split them up?

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** You just look in the Auditor General's report.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** Do you split them up?

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** By categories, from \$1 to \$500, and then from \$500 to \$1,000, and so on? Is that what the hon. member means by splitting them up?

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** Is it possible to split them up so you will get them within the limit?

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** That would be quite difficult. The change was made because you gentlemen said you would help me by bringing the figure up to \$15,000 where I could give out contracts without calling for public tenders. This question was put to me by the hon. member for Kamloops and we found out that it would take so much time, because we find that it takes the year round to complete them and hand them to the Auditor General. If I remember correctly the hon. member for Kamloops dropped his question, redrafted it and asked for special contracts.

I know my officials are full of good will, but if I want to have the list revised in my estimates I think I should tell them to go ahead with the works instead of working on this. For my information generally, when I want to know something about my own department I look up the Auditor General's report. It is prepared by the comptroller of the treasury, and it goes in the Auditor

General's report. It is an interesting study, but a little arid at times. You would find all the information there.

**Mr. Green:** That information would not be in the Auditor General's report.

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** No?

**Mr. Green:** It would not be in the Auditor General's report we have because it covers only the period to March 31, 1952 and I was asking for the year March 31, 1952 to March 31, 1953.

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** Up to eight days ago? That would be from 1952 to 1953, because I do not think the statute came into force until last year. We would have to compile the whole thing. We will be preparing this, of course, for the Auditor General and the comptroller of the treasury. What the hon. member has been asking for is a complete report on contracts without tenders, which we generally give to the Auditor General after the end of the fiscal year.

Furthermore, I am informed that even in contracts under \$15,000 we call for tenders as usual if no loss of time is involved and if the work is not urgent. We generally do ask for tenders. May I tell the hon. gentleman that I have been sold on the system of asking for tenders on public works and I am not going to change; I am too old now to change. I have stuck to it, but hon. gentlemen did not believe me the last time. Somebody brought me down to my knees and I had to amend my bill. I knew what I was thinking of at the time. I believed in the system of calling for tenders, and I still believe in it. I do not limit myself when the amount is less than \$15,000 to not asking for tenders. We do ask for tenders. It is for the protection of hon. members as well as of the Minister of Public Works.

**Mr. Green:** Can the minister not give us the number of these contracts in each category?

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** I am told that they could put a staff on that and try to figure out the number of contracts that went through the department in the last fiscal year, and they are ready to do that as soon as I give them some free time.

The last question that was asked by the hon. gentleman had to do with the dredging of the first narrows. I cannot recall clearly, but I think in answer to a question I did make a statement to the house that the government had decided to undertake this dredging. Perhaps the hon. gentleman thinks it is a small job and that the moment I said go ahead and dredge the first narrows, the work would start the next day. It is not that easy.