

Supply—Public Works

these firms do make contributions to political parties. If this is so, then we should know who is making the contribution. The least the government could do is to have some type of clause in their contracts prohibiting the firm involved from making a contribution to any political party.

• (8:40 p.m.)

These are some of the matters on which I should like the minister to dwell when he deals with tendering on some of the contracts let by the government. This particular department, Mr. Chairman, is going to spend \$306 million, which is an increase over last year's \$294 million. That is a lot of money and I think we should have full value for it. We should also have answers to our questions.

I should now like to direct my mind to the third aspect of the operations of the minister's department, namely the question of waterfront lots. I am sure the minister remembers the heated debates that took place last session on the subject of waterfront lots in the Toronto area, more especially those in which the former member for York-Humber engaged. During those debates the hon. member obtained a legal opinion from the former minister of public works, and I should just like to make reference to the former minister's remarks on the subject of this legal opinion as they are reported at page 3367 of *Hansard* for March 29, 1966, where he said:

Mr. Chairman, last Friday when these estimates were being discussed some questions were raised about the problem created by the practice of fill being put in waterlots along a long stretch of the shore of lake Ontario. The same matter was raised again today. I think I should explain where the responsibility of this parliament lies and how the situation is somewhat complicated by a division of jurisdiction.

Now comes the legal opinion, Mr. Chairman.

The provinces own the land under the water, in other words, these waterlots, and it can be transferred by them to private owners, as is the case in the situation presently under discussion. When private owners acquire the waterlots the federal government cannot interfere with that in any way. Then the municipal affairs department of the province and the governments of the municipalities have jurisdiction in the ordinary way over building permits and that sort of thing. The federal authority has jurisdiction over the subject of navigation, and it is only in that connection that it is able to have any legislative responsibility and can take legislative action as set out in the Navigable Waters Protection Act. The difficulty in this particular case—and I am very quick to admit it is a real difficulty—is that of a person owning the lot getting a building permit from the municipality in the usual way.

[Mr. Gilbert.]

So from the former minister of public works, Mr. Chairman, you get the legal opinion that this waterfront property is owned by the province, but that there is a divided jurisdiction between the federal authority and the provincial authority.

You might ask, Mr. Chairman, just why I am inquiring about this matter. I should like to ask the minister as to the position of the federal government in regard to the Roberts Bank property in British Columbia. If the position is that the province owns the land under the water, then all that the provincial premier has to do is to convey it to the proper authority, and then the proper authority has full control and jurisdiction over the property. The present minister has taken a very active part in the Roberts Bank dispute and has said that the federal authority has full responsibility. If we were to apply the legal opinion and the reasoning used by the former minister of works, then we may find, Mr. Chairman, that it is the province that has full authority. We are going to spend a great deal of money on the Roberts Bank project, Mr. Chairman, so I think we should clear up once and for all who it is that has authority over the waterfront lot on which the harbour is going to be built. We would not want to invest so much money unless we had full control over the property.

The last item I should like to discuss is the co-ordination of his department with others. What co-ordination exists between the minister's department and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. If ever a problem was plaguing Canadians these days, it is that of pollution. I think the Department of Public Works should work hand in hand with whatever department of the federal government has responsibility for that problem. I should like a statement from the minister concerning the co-ordination that is necessary to solve this problem. Whether we like it or not, Mr. Chairman, there is a feeling among Canadians that this problem of pollution appears to be just lying in state at the moment, with the federal authority taking no real initiative to find a solution, trying to rest its case on the argument that the responsibility lies with the provinces.

One can readily say, Mr. Chairman, that there is dual responsibility for this problem on the part of the provinces and the federal government. I should like a clear statement from the minister that his department is taking active steps to meet the problem of pollution by co-ordinating its activities with those