

Supply—Northern Affairs

aircraft on field projects. The cost of hiring aircraft in 1953-54 was \$10,000 and the estimate for this year is \$28,340.

Item agreed to.

310. National museum of Canada, \$305,681.

Mr. Dinsdale: I presume, Mr. Chairman, that "national museum of Canada" refers to one central museum. During the discussion today there has been reference to other museums located across the country. Are they considered to be part of the national museum, or are they quite distinct?

Mr. Lesage: No, the others come under the heading of historic sites. This item refers to the national museum of Canada located here in Ottawa. The others are historic sites in which are located articles of historical value. For example, the Alexander Graham Bell museum which is to be built will contain items pertaining to the development of the telephone invented by Bell. Most of these, though, come under the historic sites division.

Mr. Dinsdale: Can the minister indicate whether articles of historic interest located across the country are brought to the national museum or whether they are retained in the locality in which they are found.

Mr. Lesage: Some of these articles are housed in provincial museums. It all depends on who finds them. The individual who finds such objects might offer them to the national museum, to a private museum, or to a provincial museum, or even keep them for himself.

Mr. Dinsdale: The minister is no doubt aware that it used to be the general practice a few years ago for groups from the United States, for example, to carry out research on Canadian historical sites and remove these objects of historical interest. Is that still possible?

Mr. Lesage: No, where there is federal jurisdiction we do not allow the export of such articles.

Mr. McIvor: We have a museum in Fort William and it might be well worth the minister's while to have a look at it.

Item agreed to.

Engineering and water resources branch—

311. Branch administration, \$63,156.

Mr. Bryson: Mr. Chairman, I would like to know if this is the item under which we might discuss mineral development roads?

[Mr. Lesage.]

Mr. Lesage: Mineral development comes under the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, except for mineral development in the north which will come under northern administration votes. This vote has only to do with water resources.

Mr. Bryson: Pardon me, Mr. Chairman, but I said mineral development roads. Would they come under this item?

Mr. Lesage: Yes, I suppose they would come under the engineering and water resources branch.

Mr. Bryson: In that case, Mr. Chairman, and in view of the many letters which have been exchanged between the minister and the Saskatchewan department of highways, would the minister care to make a statement regarding the continuation of the negotiations which have been going on during the past year in connection with the Flin Flon-Denare Beach road?

Mr. Lesage: Mr. Douglas, the Saskatchewan minister of highways, visited me on or about, I believe, April 26 and we discussed the matter again but there is nothing more I can say at this moment.

Mr. MacLean: Mr. Chairman, this item dealing with engineering and water resources is important since it covers a subject of very wide application which is of great importance to this country. We must safeguard our resources such as this, for their neglect would have a detrimental effect on soil and forest conservation. It has been pointed out by experts in this field that water conservation is not an engineering question. It is not a question of building dams after the floods have occurred. It is rather a question of developing soil conditions so that the moisture soaks in where it falls, which in turn prevents the flooding of rivers and water courses downstream causing all sorts of havoc. I say that merely to illustrate that water, soil, and forest conservation are interrelated, and I would suggest to the minister that since his department is called the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources he should perhaps take the lead in co-ordinating conservation efforts generally. Conservation is not a matter which concerns his department only. In a broad sense it is a matter in which the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys are also vitally interested. I would be very pleased to see some sort of co-ordinating committee set up which would deal with this matter not only as it concerns departments of the federal government, but also provincial governmental departments. A committee of the privy council already deals with matters