

Supply—External Affairs

permit Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation to insure mortgages on existing or used homes in the medium priced field?

Hon. Howard C. Green (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, so far as I know there will be no further amendments to the National Housing Act at this session.

HARBOURS**LAKEHEAD—ANNOUNCEMENT OF NAMES OF COMMISSIONERS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. D. M. Fisher (Port Arthur): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. It stems from the announcement this week of the names of the lakehead harbour commissioners. Especially in view of the fact that the onus for two of the appointments lies with the municipalities, would the minister explain why the complete slate was announced not by the minister but by the defeated Conservative candidate in Fort William?

Hon. George H. Hees (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I suppose it was because the defeated candidate in Fort William was more on his toes, perhaps, than the member for Port Arthur.

Mr. Fisher: I could make some observations there, Mr. Speaker, but I will just ask this supplementary question. Was the announcement forwarded to the defeated candidate from the minister's office or from that of Mr. Grosart?

Mr. Hees: I have no knowledge of it being forwarded from either office, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Pickersgill: Just intuition.

SUPPLY

The house in committee of supply, Mr. Rea in the chair.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Terminable services—

734.—Purchase of flour to be given to the United Nations relief and works agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East—further amount required and, notwithstanding section 35 of the Financial Administration Act, to authorize payments to be made pursuant to this vote up to the 1st day of April, 1960, \$1,500,000.

Mr. McMillan: Mr. Chairman, with respect to item 734 and also item 741, which is very much akin, I think the minister should be able to tell us the amounts that will be spent up to and including March 31. We are not opposed to this vote, but we can vote this amount now and we can also vote one-sixth, one-quarter, one-third or whatever supply is necessary for the following months.

Items 734 and 741 total \$15 million, and that is a lot of money. I do not think we should have juggling around between two years in the accounts.

In support of what I say I would refer the minister to something he said when referring to the elimination of the NATO defence equipment account, as found on page 1240 of *Hansard* for June 17, 1958:

We believe that in the interests of good accounting practice and the maintenance of proper parliamentary control of expenditures this account should be liquidated during the current year.

I think we should vote the amount of money that will be expended up to the end of March of this year. The minister should be able to give us that amount, and he should be able to tell us approximately what will be spent in the next two months.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Apparently the hon. member is unaware of the fact that the contributions that have been authorized by parliament by way of Colombo plan and similar aid have never precisely fitted the fiscal year, and in almost all cases it has been the practice of parliament to authorize these, so far as the fiscal year appropriation is concerned, on what is called an open end basis. In other words, the authority does not lapse on March 31 of the year in question. It is not possible to make these appropriations fit precisely the fiscal year, and the reason this particular appropriation is brought forward in the 1958-59 estimates is that we wish to move as much of the flour, just as quickly as we can, and as much of it will be moved before March 31 as can be arranged by the Minister of Trade and Commerce. No one can say at this moment precisely how much it will be, but as much will be moved as can be moved.

The same applies to the purchase of wheat and flour under item 741. The Minister of Trade and Commerce is taking up these purchases from the Canadian wheat board and is moving them as quickly as it is possible to arrange for them to be shipped. I think it would be the wish of the house to make this aid effective by speeding it.

Mr. McMillan: Can the minister tell us how much has been moved as of this date?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): No.

Mr. Benidickson: I think this point is very well taken. Surely within two weeks of the end of the fiscal year we can get more precise information as to the probabilities of shipment of this grain and flour than the minister proposes to give at this stage. He has a second alternative. If he wanted to do so he could ask for more than one-sixth of the requirement he thinks will be needed