

Mr. McKENZIE: What for?

Mr. McCURDY: Further Supplementary Estimates for the Public Works Department—exactly on all fours with this vote.

Mr. McKENZIE: What kind of Supplementaries?

Mr. McCURDY: The same kind we are discussing here now.

Mr. McKENZIE: I would like my hon. friend to give details of the \$1,285,366.73 vote he just mentioned.

Mr. McCURDY: The example that I have given is not an isolated one. I find that in 1909-1910 the Department of Public Works asked for further Supplementary Estimates amounting to over \$1,077,000. In 1907-1908, \$1,173,337.49 was asked for, for the very same purpose. There was no substantial decrease below \$1,000,000 until the year 1911, then this department asked Parliament for \$715,696, and in the following year for \$244,000, the next year for \$303,000, the next year for \$425,000, and in 1916-1917 they got it down to \$9,993.

Mr. McKENZIE: We are not responsible for the expenditure of 1916-1917.

Mr. McCURDY: No, but compare the vote of that year with the votes asked for in 1907-1908, and on up to 1911.

Mr. McKENZIE: No matter what the votes were, I say it is bad practice to spend money without the authority of Parliament.

Mr. McCURDY: I quite agree that that should be avoided wherever possible, but my hon. friend knows that last year was a peculiar one. The price of coal could not be anticipated. What would my hon. friend have us do? Close down the furnaces? The public service must go on.

Mr. McKENZIE: What furnaces?

Mr. McCURDY: The furnaces that heat the public buildings in Ottawa.

Mr. McKENZIE: The price of coal has not gone up to that extent.

Mr. McCURDY: We had either to buy coal, or let the furnaces go out. We chose the course of buying the coal and keeping the fires going.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): How much is included in this item for coal?

Mr. McCURDY: \$25,282 for coal, and \$142,000 for salaries for engineers and firemen.

[Mr. McCurdy.]

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): You could have anticipated what the salaries would be.

Mr. McCURDY: I do not think that could have been anticipated any more than the price of coal. My hon. friend knows what happened with regard to the supply of coal on Government contracts last year. A new agreement was made with the miners, in August I think it was, called the Montreal agreement, whereby an advance in wages was given, and consumers of coal, the Government among the number were asked to pay more for coal. That was something that could not be foreseen.

Mr. McKENZIE: The Montreal agreement was late in October, and every Government establishment in the country had coal before that.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): That covers \$25,000, but there is \$167,000 in this item.

Mr. McCURDY: Salaries of engineers and firemen amount to \$142,000.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): Those salaries should be foreseen. There is no reason why we should not know at the beginning of the year, how many engineers we need for the public buildings in Ottawa. There is something to be said for the minister's argument in regard to coal, but he can hardly justify the large amount for the salaries of additional engineers. And then there is \$55,000 for water. Do we not know what we are paying for water in the public buildings in Ottawa? How did that increase come about?

Mr. McCURDY: The increase in the pay of the engineers, firemen, etc., could not have been foreseen any more than the increase in regard to the miners under the Montreal agreement.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): I am not disputing the coal, but the engineers.

Mr. McCURDY: But I have to mention the coal to show the reason for the other increases. Coal went up because the wages of the miners went up, and other expenses went up in consequence. These engineers, firemen, etc., came under the reclassification by the Civil Service Commission, and were put on prevailing rates, and the result is they were entitled to \$142,000 more pay than they would have received under the rates that existed at the time the Estimates were adopted last year. Were we to let these men go without their pay, or put them on part pay until Parliament as-