

*Supply—Public Works*

establishments, and if the commission recommends him that recommendation goes to the treasury board. The treasury board has a set of principles and regulations dealing with those cases. When the treasury board decides that a man meets all the conditions requisite to becoming permanent, and the department is within the establishment of permanent positions, he may or may not become a permanent employee.

There is not so much difference now between permanent and temporary employees. Even temporary employees, in certain instances, come under the superannuation act, and they are entitled to nearly all the same privileges. As Minister of Public Works I am ready to give any explanation for nearly any department of which I have knowledge, but this matter would probably come under the Minister of Finance or the Secretary of State. The minister who represents the civil service commission in this house would probably give a full explanation. I have given it to you as I understand it in my own department; I think that is the way it operates.

**Mr. Noseworthy:** The minister mentioned the number of permanent employees to which his department is entitled. Can he give me any information as to how, for instance, you arrive at the number of permanent employees to which that department is entitled?

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** I am speaking only from memory, but I do not think there is any branch of the department in which more than 75, 80 or 85 per cent of the employees are permanent. The others would be temporary. As vacancies come along probably these temporaries become permanent, and they are replaced by other temporaries.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** Mr. Chairman, as I listened with fascination to the minister brushing aside our questions and mesmerizing us in his inimitable way, I was reminded of an experience I had many years ago. I met an old Tory friend of mine coming home from a meeting at which Sir Wilfrid Laurier spoke in Toronto. I thought something had happened to him, and I asked him about the speech. He said it was a great speech, so I asked him what it was all about. He said, "I do not know what it was about, but it was like a poem, and I have been seeing visions". After listening to the minister for a while I am in something like that state.

I do want to come back to earth and ask the minister one or two questions. The point I am going to raise was raised before, but I am going to suggest to the minister that he

[Mr. Fournier (Hull).]

did not deal with it as fully as he might have. There is a sentence in the report from the other place, to which the member for Vancouver-Quadra referred, concerning the practice of other departments by-passing the Department of Public Works and building up little public works branches of their own. I am very interested in that because the minister replied to that, as I understand him, by saying that the Department of Public Works was the servant of the other departments and did work for them. I also understood him to say they were not going to be too small-minded if they found other departments setting up in business for themselves.

I am small-minded about that. I want to know why they are doing it. I am going to read to the minister some of the figures for the competing departments, which appear to be waxing in size.

**Mr. Fournier (Hull):** May I interrupt for just a moment? I am ready to listen and answer all questions if they relate to my department. However, if this matter relates to some other departments I think the hon. gentleman would be well advised to ask the ministers concerned. I have had questions asked about the civil service, and if there are questions concerning my colleagues I would rather have you ask these other gentlemen.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** There is nothing I like better than to oblige the minister, but I believe this matter is closely related to public works. We really have to have a beginning, otherwise when we get to the other departments they will say we should have asked the Department of Public Works. We have had that experience before. The reason I think this is related to public works is that after all we start—I am almost quoting the minister—from the proposition that public works is public works and it has a quota of engineers, draftsmen and technicians. It is not so many years ago that this department looked after public works almost exclusively.

We realize that when the war came there was a sudden growth in all kinds of undertakings. I would think it would be quite reasonable then that other departments would inevitably embark on enterprises of their own. We are now eight years after the war, however, although we have a kind of lukewarm war in the offing; nevertheless I want to seriously ask the minister—I think he can tell us—just what has come to pass. Where does the Department of Public Works come in? What has come to be the limitation of the functions of public works? I want to remind the minister—I shall make it quite brief