

Mr. MANION: Largely municipal public works such as sewers, and that kind of thing.

Mr. SANDERSON: I do not mean sewers and that kind of thing.

Mr. MANION: Those are public works, but municipal public works.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): The grant was left open to be appropriated by the governor in council, and appropriations have not been made for public buildings.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: I think there is a large building going up in Regina for the World's Grain Congress, constructed out of that fund.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): Not built by the Public Works department.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: No, but out of the \$20,000,000.

Mr. EULER: In connection with the vote of \$61,000 for a public building at New Liskeard, \$10,000 of which is a re-vote, \$15,000 having been voted last year, am I to assume that that is now under contract?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): No.

Mr. EULER: What is the purpose of this vote of \$61,000.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): It is to construct the building. Plans are being prepared and, when ready, tenders will be called and the building probably constructed.

Mr. EULER: Is the same true with respect to the public building at Penetanguishene, for which there is a vote of \$57,000, part of which is a re-vote?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): That is to acquire the site and construct the building.

Mr. EULER: It includes both?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): Yes.

Mr. HEENAN: In connection with the minister's reply to the question of my hon. friend from Toronto (Mr. Factor) with respect to the customs house there, and the minister's assurance that it would be completed at some time in the future, can he assure the committee that there will be no cessation of work on the building in the meantime?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): There will be no cessation of work in respect of existing contracts; that is all.

Mr. HEENAN: According to the estimates there is a reduction of approximately \$1,250,000 in the expenditure on public buildings in Ontario this year. In view of the unemploy-

[Mr. Sanderson.]

ment situation in this province, does the minister consider it a good thing to reduce the expenditure on necessary public buildings and at the same time grant employment relief through other channels?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): I can only repeat what I have mentioned frequently, that these buildings are constructed out of the revenues, and we are going as far as we think the revenues of Canada warrant in the construction of public buildings at the present time.

Mr. HEENAN: I do not think the minister got my point. Last year we voted \$20,000,000 to make grants to the provinces and municipalities for unemployment relief. After all is said and done, the revenues come from the taxpayers of Canada, whether they be collected by the municipalities, the provinces or the federal government. My thought is that we might well have gone on with our building program and spent money in that way through the construction of necessary public buildings. As the minister said, the revenue of the country has to be considered. If however we are going to spend it, would it not be better to spend it on our own public works rather than hand it out to some other body to spend in some other way?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): I think my hon. friend will agree that the manner of spending the money is a matter of policy. He has laid down, I believe the principle that the relief of unemployment is primarily a provincial and municipal matter, and that the federal government may properly assist when unemployment becomes acute. Undoubtedly he will agree with me that funds providing for the relief of unemployment should be fluid and available for expenditure where unemployment exists in the greatest measure. If an item were placed in the estimates the funds would be available for expenditure only on that particular work at that particular place, so that an item in the estimates would not meet an emergency as effectively as a direct vote for the relief of unemployment when from time to time urgent conditions arise. The principle has been adopted of securing knowledge of local conditions through the cooperation of the provinces and municipalities. On reflection I think my hon. friend will agree that the direct vote is better fitted to give a greater measure of relief than is a fixed amount in the estimates for some particular place where unemployment may not be acute. On the other hand it might so happen that such moneys would not be available where conditions were unfavourable. Expenditure on public buildings does not always afford as effective measure of unemploy-