

Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): No, Mr. Chairman. I have drawn attention to the fact that this item is broken into two parts. The first, a sum of \$221,292, is for salaries and wages applicable to the hydrographic service in general. The second part, \$256,200 is for the conversion of the ship, the *William J. Stewart* and the completion of the annual overhaul and fitting of the four hydrographic vessels.

Mr. Chevrier: Does the first part of the vote apply to the crews on the ships?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I am informed that it does not. The increase in the sum required for wages and salaries is due to the fact that there has been a slowdown in turnover and there have not been vacancies arising in the service.

Mr. Chevrier: I take it that the \$256,200 applies exclusively to the hydrographic ships and to the maintenance and operation of the crews. If that is the case it seems to be a small amount for that purpose because the *William J. Stewart* is a big ship.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): This is a further amount required, as my hon. friend will appreciate.

Item agreed to.

General—

760. Purchases of air photography and the expenses of the interdepartmental committee on air surveys, including purchases of equipment—further amount required, \$2,300,000.

Mr. Dumas: Mr. Chairman, would the minister explain this vote. In the main estimates under a similar heading we voted an amount of \$1,900,000 and now we have this supplementary estimate for \$2,300,000 which is a large sum.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Yes, Mr. Chairman. This work of air photography was carried on under favourable conditions and very excellent progress was made. It was found to be desirable and economical that it should proceed at an accelerated pace. It is going to cost us less money in the end to do it that way. By March 31 the companies under contract with the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys will have completed work totalling \$2,300,000 for which no funds are available in the existing vote.

Mr. Dumas: Over and above what was voted?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Yes.

Mr. Dumas: The minister said it would cost less money in the end. I understand this work is done under contract. How can it cost

less money? I believe the price is based on a square mile basis so surely the price would be the same.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Yes. There is an economy in more constant flying. That is the reason it was found to be more economical to expedite and accelerate the aerial photographic program.

Mr. Dumas: Economy to the companies who are on contract?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): And the government.

Mr. Dumas: Can the minister tell the committee to which companies this amount will be paid? I understand three companies are concerned.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Spartan Air Services, Photographic Air Surveys and Aero Surveys. These are the main contractors.

Mr. Dumas: I think there are three, Spartan Airways, Aero Surveys and Photographic Service. Can the minister tell the committee how much will be paid to each of those companies?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I shall be glad to obtain that information for my hon. friend.

Mr. Chevrier: How are these contracts awarded? Is it done by public tender or by allocation?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I will obtain that information.

Mr. Benidickson: Mr. Chairman, I think this is rather an astonishing illustration of the abuse of supplementary estimates. The minister seemed sympathetic to some of the remarks that were made this morning by the hon. member for St. Denis, and if he was sincere in his appearance of approval of the legal authorities cited by the hon. member I would think that he would want to avoid a repetition of this type of thing in the future. I draw the minister's attention to the fact that the original item, which actually was presented to the house very late owing to the fact that we had an election, was not as large as this item. Usually the main estimates and the intentions of the government with respect to spending are decided upon in December and in a normal year are probably submitted to the House of Commons in January. Last year the main estimates were presented to the house on May 13. Now, shortly after the fiscal year had been entered upon this administration, if it had had respect for the House of Commons and its rights with respect to spending authority, would have known something about this accelerated program. I draw to the attention of the committee the fact that the original estimate, based upon