

*Supply—Solicitor General*

year of \$12,111,929 sought by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I thought I should bring this fact to the attention of the committee because members may wish to expand upon this point when we are dealing with the various items.

**Mr. Aiken:** The minister raised one matter, Mr. Chairman, with which I should like him to deal further. It relates in general to trade training within the institutions. His last remark caused me some concern because it indicated that the penitentiaries branch may be reviewing the trade training program in institutions with regard to work that may become competitive with private business. I cannot help but agree that in some cases unfair competition with private industry does result. However, I would urge very strongly that the minister should not review the trade training program with a view to cutting it back but perhaps with a view to directing it into channels which would not create undue competition with the private sector.

In that regard I should like to refer to such work as can be done for other departments of the government. I know that the penitentiaries branch provides gymnasium equipment and so forth for schools. I would hope that the production of these items would not interfere with private industry. Nevertheless, I think it is a general weakness of the program, particularly in the minimum security institutions, that the inmates are not provided with productive work to do. I would be very sorry to see any cut-back in the trade training program or in the actual production programs these institutions are undertaking. I believe there are many areas in which work can be done by the inmates of a penitentiary and the resultant product put on the market without any interference with private business. I think studies could very easily be undertaken to that end. I hope that in any review we will not allow ourselves to be frightened away from institutional production.

I should like to refer also to the expansion that is being proposed at Beaver Creek camp, which the minister mentioned today. Changes are contemplated in inmate employment, but I believe this work must be effective. In the Beaver Creek camp there has been some move to produce equipment and I understand there is a good deal of work available that could be done. I hope that the expansion is based on some sort of increased production and that the question of accommodation will be a secondary consideration. The minister mentioned

[Mr. Pennell.]

there had been some discussion with the provincial department of lands and forests about this camp. I expect there are plenty of jobs which can be performed on behalf of that department.

● (3:50 p.m.)

Along the same line, Mr. Chairman, I think that the penitentiaries branch should make more adequate use of inmate labour for local projects. Here again I realize that the department has to be careful not to place itself in competition with local labour. I know that in some cases there has been hesitancy about sending out inmates to perform very healthy outdoor jobs which would benefit the community. These are the sort of jobs in respect of which nobody else can either provide the funds or the personnel, jobs such as clearing park areas for the department of lands and forests or local communities. The inmates would not compete with local industry for labour in the performance of such tasks because in most cases no money is available.

Up to this point I think the policy in this regard has been reasonably good. However, I have noticed that several projects at Beaver Creek camp were turned down and there appeared to be no logical reason for refusing them. These were projects on which no local labour would have been employed. They were community projects for which no other money would have been available. These inmates could have been put to work to improve the community's landscape and appearance. As I stated before, they would have been provided with good, healthy outdoor work and their physical and mental health would have benefited.

From what I have seen of these requests, Mr. Chairman, it seems to me the policy of the department is not very clear. Decisions are not left to the local camp superintendent at all but are referred to some other quarter, probably to Kingston. Apparently there is no way of knowing in advance whether or not a project will be approved. I know that two or three projects which were requested had to be sent on for decision, even though they appeared to me to involve the perfectly logical use of inmate labour. I can see no reason whatever why the superintendent at Beaver Creek camp should be required to get consent from somebody else.

I go back to what I said at the beginning of my remarks, Mr. Chairman, that there is not enough control within the local institutions. I refer not only to Beaver Creek camp but to others as well. I suggest that surely to