

*Supply—Public Works*

thing more at the moment—how important it is to preserve that historic building.

Under this particular vote repairs and alterations are carried out to an enormous number of government owned buildings, and they are not only the matters I mentioned such as painting, decorating and so on. There are also alterations. I feel that the hon. member does not seriously want a detailed explanation of this. There are numerous items for the repair and items for the upkeep of buildings in the total vote, and the main estimates ordinarily run into \$6 million.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** What the minister is saying is that it is only a million.

**Mr. Churchill:** Oh no; that is a Liberal expression.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The minister is pretty liberal with the million dollars, but I cannot let the minister's remarks about the west block go unchallenged.

**Mr. Churchill:** I thought you would agree with me.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** What the government is doing with the west block is a terrible mistake and an uncalled for extravagance. What should have been done was what was originally suggested, take the building down, mark the stones, the outer stones, build a proper inner structure—all of which could have been done for less than a quarter of what this is going to cost before they are finished with it—and then put up the external stones so that it would resemble the building now there. I predict that this is going to turn out to be one of the worst errors of judgment in the field of construction or reconstruction, ever made by any Canadian government.

**Mr. Bell (Carleton):** What was done with the old supreme court building?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The proper thing was done with the old supreme court building. It was an old stable and should have been torn down, and the proper thing was done.

**Mr. Bell (Carleton):** It was not done.

**An hon. Member:** Due regard for our historic sites.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Yes, "le palais de danse". We know the kind of historic sites you mean.

**Mr. Fulton:** Vandalism—a parking lot out of the old supreme court building.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** When the minister gets back from Arizona Charlie's—

[Mr. Churchill.]

**Mr. Fulton:** That is where you have been all afternoon.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** —I would like to make some observations about the west block. There has been a mistaken story in the newspapers about the office of Sir John Macdonald in the west block, but the fact of the matter is that Sir John Macdonald never had an office in the west block at any time at all.

**Mr. Fulton:** Was it the crystal ball that told you that?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The Minister of Veterans Affairs and I will agree on that. This was checked very carefully several years ago when this myth first started. I think it may have been Alexander Mackenzie, the first Liberal prime minister who was also minister of public works, who had an office there but Sir John A. Macdonald never had an office in the west block. This is perhaps not very important but the minister challenged me and I am responding.

**Mr. Bourget:** This item also includes materials. Could the minister let us know how much is for the purchase of materials?

**Mr. Churchill:** I am not sure I could give that information to the hon. member tonight. I shall refer the question to the Minister of Public Works and perhaps he could get in touch with the hon. member. The information I have in front of me is not broken down into materials, etc.

**Mr. Bourget:** I think the materials represent quite an important amount. A few minutes ago the minister stressed that these projects were undertaken to provide winter works, and I would like to know how much of the money is for the purchase of materials and how much has been granted for projects. Maybe the minister has no information about the quantity of material that has been bought, but could he tell us the number of projects, or the number of individual projects costing over \$2,500, and where they have been undertaken?

**Mr. Churchill:** I shall give you an example. In Newfoundland there are six projects in federal buildings and post offices, running from \$1,750 in one instance up to \$4,200 in another. That is the type of work that is being done.

**Mr. Bourget:** What work was done there? Was it repairs to the plumbing?