

Main Estimates 1982-83

accommodation provided by the Department of Public Works. How far into the revenue dependency plan is the government? Is the plan wholly implemented as yet? If not, how far along the road has the government proceeded? When might we see the completion of the full implementation of revenue dependency so that we will see reflected in the estimates the cost of accommodation provided to the various departments of government by the Department of Public Works?

Mr. Johnston: Madam Speaker, I can understand the hon. member's interest, being a former minister of public works. I trust and hope that he is supportive of the principle of revenue dependency. As hon. members will recall, my colleague the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Cosgrove) and I announced last year the experiment in revenue dependency in the Department of Public Works, which was a simulated model. In order to establish a means whereby revenue dependency could be made to work in the area of the Department of Public Works accommodation, a simulated model was established opposite the other departments. I understand from my colleague, the Minister of Public Works, that we would hope to see the results of that simulated model some time in spring, 1982.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, the minister may be assured that I am indeed an ardent supporter of the theory of revenue dependency. I would like to see it implemented as quickly as possible because it will do nothing but increase efficiency in government and effect cost savings.

My second question has to do with the rationalization of real property services, which is a matter fairly closely allied to the first question. As the President of the Treasury Board is aware—and I see his colleague the Minister of Public Works sitting beside him—Canada's Department of Public Works is probably the biggest landlord in the world with well over \$40 billion of property, real and other, in its list of assets. Indeed, I always thought it rather disgraceful that the Government of Canada was not able to ascertain with any accuracy just what the precise value was of the property it did own.

When is it anticipated, if at all, that the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) will be submitting a proposal to cabinet, which would at least commence an experiment in or bring about a program for the rationalization of real property services in the Government of Canada?

Mr. Johnston: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to advise the hon. member that again he has touched upon a matter that we regard as a very high priority in terms of the management of government assets. Proposals have been brought forward for cabinet consideration in that area. I am also advised that if the government could obtain some co-operation from the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), as opposition House leader, with respect to Bill C-91, which facilitates the use by the government of certain techniques in terms of asset management, such as lease purchase agreements and so on, which in many instances are in the interests of Canadian taxpayers at large, that, in turn, would give a real boost to our efforts in that direction, and we look forward to his co-operation.

Mr. Cosgrove: We must have his agreement.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, the minister will certainly get all the co-operation he deserves, certainly as much co-operation that he and his colleagues provided us during the closing months of 1979 when they took seven and a half days to debate the mortgage interest credit legislation that we put forward. I believe we have been on Bill C-78 for three or three and a half days now. Certainly the minister will get that kind of co-operation. If I can have the attention of the President of the Treasury Board for a moment, he said, if I heard him correctly, that such a proposal for the rationalization of real property was being put forward or was being considered. Am I to understand it is in fact being considered at cabinet level at this time?

Mr. Johnston: Madam Speaker, a great deal of work has been done in the area. It has been considered by cabinet colleagues.

Mr. Nielsen: It has or has not?

Mr. Johnston: It has been considered by cabinet colleagues. It is a matter that affects not only the Department of Public Works, as the hon. member knows, but also a large number of real property assets which are held in departments other than the Department of Public Works. I am sure the hon. member for Yukon is aware of assets that are held in such departments as the Department of National Defence, for example. I can assure this House that we are very much cognizant of the necessity for and the desirability of having better asset management across government and better utilization of those resources.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, I have one brief comment. As the Minister of Public Works will know, I would assure the President of the Treasury Board of the full support of this party in the implementation of that kind of program, which might perhaps fill the great gap that is left in the Department of Public Works now that the post office has left under the aegis of a new Crown corporation. It would give the department a challenge and keep them busy as nothing else would.

Madam Speaker: This question period has gone on for quite a while. I will recognize two members who have not yet had a chance to put a question. I would ask the hon. members not to go beyond two questions because this session is really being prolonged.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Madam Speaker, I want to follow along on the questions asked by the hon. member for Portage-Marquette (Mr. Mayer) regarding the western development fund. My understanding is that the estimates are indicative of all the money being spent by the government in this particular year. I have looked in vain for any mention of the western development fund. Could the minister please advise me where I might find the western development fund in the estimates right now?

Mr. Waddell: Dire straits.