

Mr. FRASER: You are purchasing for the different departments.

Mr. FOURNIER (Hull): Yes, but not for the film board.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Question.

Mr. FULTON: The minister said if we would make a reasonable request he would try to comply with it. He has been asked, if he could not give us the information for this year, to let us have it for last year. He was asked to state the value of the furniture supplied last year to the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the value of the furniture supplied to the Department of National Defence. Surely there are files from which that information can be obtained.

Mr. FOURNIER (Hull): My officials tell me that it would take some time to work out the whole breakdown. It is not done in that way in the department, but we can do it to please hon. members and I could give the answer as soon as I get it from the officials.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: This shows—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: I am not worrying about interruptions. Some hon. members have been out of the Chamber all afternoon, but they are back now that there is a possibility of a vote. I am simply trying to find out the basis of this item, and the minister says that he cannot give me that information but that he can give me any information he has with respect to expenditure. Last year the amount expended for furniture was \$600,000 and I want to know how that was divided among the departments. Two years ago there was a director of economy, but when he started to direct economy he found he had to leave his job. We now have Mr. Murphy as director of economy. I should like to know exactly how the system works. Apparently the minister receives chits from various departments, but he keeps no record because it is impossible to give that information.

Mr. FOURNIER (Hull): Oh, yes, we do; that is not fair.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: All we are asking for is how much was spent for the Department of Veterans Affairs. I was greatly moved by the address of the minister, and I began to think that all the \$300,000 worth of furniture was going to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. MACKENZIE: Oh, no.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: That was the purport of my hon. friend's most eloquent speech. I am trying to find out how much goes to

[Mr. A. Fournier.]

these various departments, and I can make it even more simple. Up to date we have voted five-twelfths of supply, and I should like to know how much has been expended during the present year on furniture for veterans affairs, national defence and reconstruction. Surely we are entitled to that information. The minister says it is only a matter of a few hundred thousand dollars. That is the philosophy and psychology against which we protest. We say, "carried, carried"; then we finally come to an item where we ask for some information and the answer we receive is that there is no information for us. Surely that is not good enough. We do not want particulars as to the number of desks, the number of chairs or anything of that sort; we just want the total amount for each department, and when we have that this item will be carried as usual. Surely we are entitled to that much information; otherwise we can only conclude that tremendous expenditures are being asked for by the Department of Public Works when there is no information with regard to the necessity of those expenditures or no information as to how they are going to be disbursed.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): The minister said that \$600,000 was expended last year.

Mr. FOURNIER (Hull): I did not say expended.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): Where is that vote of \$600,000 in the estimates of last year?

Mr. FOURNIER (Hull): It is right in the book. Six hundred thousand dollars was the amount voted last year for that same item.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): Where did we vote that money last year?

Mr. SINNOTT: That can be found in the public accounts. This year they are asking for \$300,000. This \$300,000 worth of furniture may be purchased from War Assets corporation or any other company. It is all in the budget and I do not see any sense in asking useless questions.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): Can the minister tell me where we voted the money last year?

Mr. FOURNIER (Hull): In the war appropriation vote.

Amendment (Mr. Diefenbaker) negatived.

Item agreed to.

General—

603. Contingencies, \$10,000.

Mr. HANSELL: I should like to ask the minister a question that has been bothering me a long time and I am sure it has been