

Supply—Public Works

bought by Canada before Newfoundland came into confederation and was owned by Canada at that time?

Mr. Fournier (Hull): My officials say you are probably right.

Mr. Higgins: I am probably right? The minister knows I am right. What is the meaning of this phrase, then, that it was taken over?

Mr. Fournier (Hull): To make it clear, I am told that before union, external affairs had purchased that building from the commission of government, and since—

Mr. Higgins: No, no.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): Well, you know the story.

Mr. Higgins: Let me give you the facts. The property was purchased from a private individual. I do not know what department purchased it but I am assuming it was your department. The building was used to house the high commissioner, and at the time of the consummation of union it was rented to the government of Newfoundland. I want to find out the purchase price of the building when it was originally bought.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): I would not have that information. It was purchased by external affairs to house the high commissioner for Canada in Newfoundland.

Mr. Higgins: You mean there is no chance of finding out at all?

Mr. Fournier (Hull): Yes, when the external affairs officials are before the committee. You have that committee on external affairs, and you can find out there.

Mr. Higgins: Is this not the proper place to ask about it?

Mr. Fournier (Hull): No, it was transferred to public works. I did not make an inspection to find out if it was paid for by cash or with a note. We took it over, and we rented it to the province later on.

Mr. Higgins: I shall not plague the minister, then, because he has been plagued enough today. Would he be prepared to give a full answer on this tomorrow?

Mr. Fournier (Hull): I am told that you could see in the public accounts for 1946-47, when it was purchased.

Mr. Higgins: The other matter the minister is going to look up is how I got these figures for maintenance.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): I will get that information.

Item agreed to.

Acquisition, construction and improvements of public buildings—

Construction, acquisition, major repairs and improvements of, and plans and sites for, public buildings listed in the details of the estimates, provided that treasury board may increase or decrease the amount within the vote to be expended on individual listed projects—

324. Newfoundland, \$550,000.

Mr. Noseworthy: This is the place where the minister asked me to raise the question about revotes. For instance, on page 396 I find that out of nine items listed for item 324 amounting to \$550,000, actually there are revotes totalling more than \$550,000. There is an allowance of some \$67,000 made for overestimates or amounts that will not be spent. I just cannot understand how a government of experts last year asked for \$575,000 of which they did not spend one cent. There are seven items for which money was voted a year ago, of which not a dollar was spent. It would appear that seven of those items are entire revotes. The minister explained that you get a certain amount of money and you are not able to finish a building so you have a revote, but here is a case where the whole amount is revoted. I would like some explanation of that, because I am going to bring up the matter in connection with the other provinces.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): Let us take the first item, Bishop's Falls public building. To complete this there will be a revote of \$45,000. You understand that in this case the work is under contract and it is proceeding. We expect to complete the work and we need a further amount of \$62,000 for this fiscal year, which comprises an amount of \$45,000 which was voted to us last year and which I am asking the house to revote this year.

Now take the second case, in which there is a revote for the Clarenville public building. This amount is to provide for the purchase of a site and the erection of a public building to accommodate the post office and customs at Clarenville. The proposed building is strongly requested by the customs division, who state they are now located in a very dilapidated building which is entirely unsuitable. The Post Office Department has also requested space in the proposed building. Pending preparation of preliminary plans the total cost is tentatively estimated at \$75,000. This was voted last year. I do not think we have succeeded as yet in purchasing the site. We hope to purchase a site. When we get the site we will have the officials in the department prepare plans. We expect that during this fiscal year we may be able to spend part of that \$75,000.