

Supply—Public Works

said, I concur heartily in the remarks of the hon. member for Kootenay West concerning the minister.

On the question of the decentralization policy in the Department of Public Works I should like to refer briefly to what I had to say in my speech on the address in reply to the speech from the throne. As found at page 413 of *Hansard* for May 23, I said:

—whenever it is administratively possible and practicable, decentralized buying and contract-letting policies should be carried out. So long as the citizen's tax dollar is being most economically handled, we should stress a program of local work for local people. In other words, fairly justifiable objections are heard when large city firms enter rural ridings to undertake contracts or to carry out works which rural people feel they could do at a cheaper rate themselves.

I fully realize, that under modern managerial techniques and having regard to the way business is generally done today it is very often economical to buy centrally and there are also many contracts that only big companies are capable of handling. But I do emphasize that a certain impersonal attitude has come into what I might call the big business picture. Very often the small man who can carry out works and contracts more cheaply is not invited to tender. Sometimes he does not know how to get on lists. I simply want to commend the minister for his intention to pursue a policy of decentralization. I know that most rural members, in fact, most members whether they be Liberal, C.C.F. or Conservative, welcome the pursuit of such a policy to a greater degree than has been the case in the past. I for one feel that such a policy fits in with the announcement in the speech from the throne concerning small businesses. We have all heard in the speech from the throne—

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether the Minister of Public Works is not going to raise a point of order at this time.

Mr. Graftey: We have all heard in the speech from the throne that the new administration intends to carry out policies that will assist small businesses. I feel this fits in very well with the policy of decentralization in the Department of Public Works.

The Chairman: Order. I regret interrupting the hon. member but at present he is reviving a debate which has already taken place. I would ask him to deal with the subject now being discussed.

Mr. Graftey: Mr. Chairman, in making these remarks I feel I am expressing an opinion in which members of all parties can concur, I am expressing the opinion that the following of a policy of decentralization to

a greater degree will result in reasonable savings within the department. I have heard so many criticisms from the opposition about various things that I thought I should stand up and make a few remarks.

Mr. Chevrier: You are a nice fellow but you are out of order.

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, the almost embarrassing congratulations of the hon. member who has just taken his seat make me glow with satisfaction and pride and also remove some of the loneliness in my heart indicated by an hon. member speaking last night in another debate. In order to quiet the minister's fears, may I say that I am not rising to make another speech. I am simply rising as a pinchhitter for the hon. member for Port Arthur who has been called away. He has asked me to reiterate two questions he put to the minister both last Friday and today and they are strictly in order because they come within the ambit of policy and administration. He has asked me to bring to the minister's attention his request for a statement from the minister on his views with respect to patronage, past, present and future. Second, he would like a statement from the minister as to the possibility of a moratorium by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation with respect to payments on houses and house rentals. With these few remarks I have discharged my duty at this time.

Mr. Green: I should like to say this with regard to patronage. If I were to speak on patronage it might take a very long time. We attempt to run the Department of Public Works in a proper, businesslike way. With regard to the other question, may I say that I will deal with housing when we get to the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation estimates. However, I would point out to my hon. friend that this stressing of a moratorium is not going to help in the provision of money for the building of homes in Canada and it might very well have a serious effect on the construction of homes and thereby on employment in the country and certainly on the procuring of homes by young couples who need them so badly. I suggest that before questions of this kind are stressed in the house it would be wise to give some thought to the results that may follow by the impression being created that there is about to be declared a moratorium on all mortgage payments. I think most hon. members will agree with me that it would not help Canada very much at the present time to have an idea of that type spread across the country.