

Supply—Public Works

Mr. Abbott: I understand it is still holding sittings. I am afraid I am not personally up to date with exactly what it is doing. It comes under the privy council office, and I have no doubt that the question can be asked when the main estimates are being considered.

Item agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

596. Ottawa—Prime Minister's residence—repairs, alterations and improvements, \$35,000.

Mr. Adamson: Obviously this is not all it will cost to put the Edwards house into suitable condition for the Prime Minister's residence. Can the Minister of Public Works say how much the total estimate is for this work? I am not complaining. I think it should be done, but I have heard that it would have been better to have pulled the house down and built a new house facing the other way so that the Prime Minister would have had the view of the Ottawa river instead of having the kitchens facing that way. Can the Minister of Public Works give us any information?

Mr. Fournier (Hull): From the notes I have here I can hardly give a definite estimate, but I am told that the alterations and improvements to the main building will cost \$135,000, and that is only an estimate. Then there are improvements to the other buildings on the grounds, and improvements to the grounds in the amount of some \$30,000. I have a note here that nobody can give a definite estimate of the cost of trying to make a new house out of this old one. The \$35,000 for which I am asking here is an amount that was allotted from my general vote in public works by the treasury board so that it could be expended during this fiscal year.

Mr. Green: What would a new house have cost?

Mr. Fournier (Hull): It all depends on the kind of house.

Mr. Green: A suitable house.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): I could not give any estimate.

Mr. Hodgson: Can the minister tell us what the property cost in the first place?

Mr. Fournier (Hull): Speaking from memory, it cost somewhere between \$130,000 and \$140,000. The property was expropriated, and there is a judgment in the exchequer court.

Mr. Adamson: That does not include the furnishings?

Mr. Fournier (Hull): I have no estimate at all on that.

Mr. Fraser: As the Prime Minister's indemnity will not be sufficient to allow him to [Mr. Knight.]

maintain this establishment I would judge that the government will look after the upkeep of it.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): It will be dealt with properly, and will be maintained by the Department of Public Works and kept in a good state of repair.

Mr. Fraser: I hope that when the minister is considering the upkeep of the Prime Minister's home he will also consider the home of the leader of the official opposition, because I think they should both be looked after by the government.

Mr. Fleming: May I ask the minister to raise his voice a little? We could not hear his recent answers over here. Did I understand him to say the price paid by the government for this property when they acquired it about four years ago was \$135,000? A question was asked about the original cost. I take it the answer did not relate to the original cost of the construction of the house, but to the original cost to the government when it acquired the property. Is that correct?

Mr. Fournier (Hull): The government proceeded by way of expropriation in this case, and evidence was heard before the exchequer court. I cannot recall the exact amount, but speaking from memory it would be somewhere between \$130,000 and \$140,000.

Mr. Fleming: Then trying to see the picture whole, to the \$130,000 we add something like another \$130,000 to date, so that the cost to date runs in the neighbourhood of \$275,000.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): No. This is an estimate for \$35,000 which is the amount that we expect to spend before the 31st of March of this year. We have retained as architects the firm of Allward and Gouinlock of Toronto. As to the estimate of the total cost, nobody before starting work on the building could give a final estimate of what the cost would be.

Mr. Fleming: I think the minister mentioned another item of expenditure earlier as well.

Mr. Abbott: That was a year or two ago. It was expropriated four or five years ago.

Mr. Fleming: We have the \$130,000 to \$140,000 to which the minister has referred and then this item of \$35,000, but if I heard the minister correctly he said that there was another item as well of \$100,000.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): I was asked the question whether I could give an estimate of what the work will cost on this residence. I said that I am told—and this would not be final—that it will amount to some \$135,000.