

accepted, and then those plans and specifications are advertised to the construction industry for a period of 30 to 60 days.

Bids are then received and publicly opened, and if they are within the money available, if the low bidder is responsive and responsible, we award the contract to him. He is entitled to increased return over his bid only for things beyond his control, such as acts of God.

If he is in a climate where there is abnormal rainfall, we know that this is going to be allowed for by the bidder so that we allow for it in the completion time we allow. We give him a completion date and charge him liquidated damages if he doesn't meet that.

I think I must say in all candor, Mr. Chairman, that GSA has not paid as much attention to seasonality as we could, and I think it is time we rectify that.

Mr. O'HARA. I think that is right. You would have to sort of shuffle your priorities around because it is entirely possible that you would run into some higher costs.

Mr. FOSTER. Yes, sir. I must point out that we have, first of all, the mission of getting the space provided when and where it is needed by our Federal customers.

Mr. O'HARA. And that is the most important.

Mr. FOSTER. That is overriding.

Mr. O'HARA. You might have to, for instance, write into the contract a provision that would permit additional payments within certain limits for work undertaken during winter months, for instance in the North. That might have quite an impact.

Mr. FOSTER. It might have a salutary effect.

Mr. O'HARA. But under your existing authority I don't know if you could do that.

Mr. FOSTER. Well, this does not bother me, sir, the fact that we may not now have authority to do it. If it is right I think the Congress would grant us the authority in due course. I was intrigued by the exchange you had with Secretary Reynolds on the possibility of subsidizing, if that is the proper word, some of these increased costs through the unemployment insurance funds.

Mr. O'HARA. Right.

Mr. FOSTER. This might be to the best interests of the Government as a whole and to the people as a whole. It could be done through the taking of appropriate alternates in our bidding. We do this all the time. We will have a base bid and certain additive or deductive alternates for which we get a separate figure. I can recall one case where we took bids on two different time periods.

The agency which was going to occupy the building was in a vast hurry. In order to satisfy them that to gain 6 months' occupancy would cost them several million dollars we had to advertise it that way.

Mr. O'HARA. There is no reason, I guess, why you could not do that as a standard matter and have alternates to try to fit the time period to a slack season of employment and if you could be made whole out of some other fund you would certainly be happy to do so.

Mr. FOSTER. Yes, indeed.

Mr. O'HARA. You are a little reluctant to spend your own appropriation for it.