

Supply—Secretary of State

The Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources has put out an occasional work that has had a good sale, and I hope in future it will put out more that will have an excellent sale. I cannot see why this particular aspect should not redound to the credit of the department; instead of that we get just a flat answer, "Cost of printing". Costs vary tremendously, obviously, according to the number of copies of the particular edition, the type of lay-out, the pictures, the whole set-up and quality of the magazine or publication, as the case may be. Just the flat statement, "Cost of printing" does not have any regard at all for the aspects I have mentioned. It suggests that within the queen's printer's department there is a brittleness and an inability really to give cost figures that are in relation to the volume of printing and the amount of sales.

In this particular regard I think the queen's printer should make very strenuous efforts to provide departments with some sort of scale of charges so that if they produce something that sells well it is reflected in the charges to them. I would appreciate hearing a comment from the minister in that regard.

Mr. Courtemanche: Details as to cost are given to each department only on request.

Mr. Winch: May I ask one question to clarify an answer given by the minister a few moments ago. Do I understand the minister's reply to mean that irrespective of what may have happened in the past, if in the past year any department sent a request for printing to the queen's printer and this government agency was not able to fill it, because of being overburdened with work or for other reasons, and let that work out to an outside firm somewhere in Canada and then they billed the department concerned for the cost to the queen's printer; and that if an objection was received from the department to the price on the basis that it could have been done cheaper by the queen's printer himself, no adjustment was made with the department at a loss to the queen's printer? Is that the definite policy now, and how long has that been in effect?

Mr. Courtemanche: There is no change in policy. The policy is to charge the cost of publications, whether printed by the queen's printer or outside.

Mr. Winch: Then, Mr. Chairman, we come to a very important point. The minister has now said that there has been no change in policy. The report of the Auditor General was

[Mr. Fisher.]

most critical of one phase of the work of the queen's printer. I refer now to the Post Office Department. Work was done for that department by contract let by the queen's printer. The Post Office Department queried that cost and an adjustment was made by the queen's printer at a price that was lower than the cost to the queen's printer on that contract that was let outside.

In view of the minister's statement now that there has been no change in policy, are we to understand that it is still the policy of the minister's department that on challenge they will reduce their own actual cost and recover the difference in some other field of endeavour?

Mr. Courtemanche: I am informed that it was an isolated case that happened two years ago, and since that time it has not happened again.

(Translation):

Mr. Caron (Hull): Can the Secretary of State tell us the total number of publications issued for sale by the queen's printer during the year 1957-58?

Mr. Courtemanche: Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, we do not have this information at hand just now. However, we can supply it a little later.

Mr. Caron: Strange that the total number of publications issued by the queen's printer's department cannot be supplied. Are most of those publications charged to the various departments?

Mr. Courtemanche: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Caron: Are there any which are not charged to various departments?

Mr. Courtemanche: No, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Caron: Is the number of copies to be printed determined by the departments?

Mr. Courtemanche: Yes.

Mr. Caron: Does the bureau print, in all cases, the exact quantities requested by departments, or can the queen's printer decide on his own to print larger runs?

Mr. Courtemanche: Mr. Chairman, the queen's printer may print extra copies for sale to the public.

Mr. Caron: Does he often do so?

Mr. Courtemanche: In most cases he does, Mr. Chairman.