

*Supply—National Defence*

recommended by the government and approved by parliament, of the insurance premium we will pay for defence. Defence is a matter in which it is difficult to allocate contracts and secure deliveries in peacetime exactly at the time you want them. There are constant modifications of equipment, and twenty-eight per cent of the total expenditure is on equipment. Then a very large proportion goes into construction, and it is difficult indeed to complete planned construction by March 31 of any particular year. On that account, if we were held down precisely to votes which could only be encumbered for contracts to be completed within the year without the possibility of transferring from item to item, then we would find ourselves with a considerable part of our defence program handicapped and curtailed, because we know we cannot complete it this year but we do not know exactly what part we will not be able to complete. We would find, instead of getting on with our defence as we are doing, we would have completed about 90 per cent of the job by the end of the year if we are held to the detailed items.

I am told that other countries have had the same experience, and we are watching them with great interest. I feel certain it could be possible to give greater details about certain things, but I would not be sure it would be in the interests of the country, or that it would be exactly what parliament wants, if the primaries were divided to any greater extent.

**Mr. Harkness:** Mr. Chairman, I realize it probably makes defence planning easier if all defence expenditure is in one vote, but for that reason it makes parliament's control of defence expenditures less complete than it would otherwise be. I doubt whether in peacetime this principle of having everything lumped in one vote is good. Just as an example, it might be the wish of parliament to spend 50 per cent of the money voted on the navy, and split the rest up between the army and the air force. With the whole sum being in one vote, the government can spend practically nothing on the navy, and spend the whole thing on the air force and army. I am not suggesting that would be done, but it is a possibility. It seems to me that if this vote were split into three for the various services it would give parliament a better control of expenditures.

**Mr. Fulton:** I should like to ask the minister a question or two with regard to the details shown on page 168. First, I should like to make some comments about the break-down. In the detail which we are given under departmental administration for the navy,

[Mr. Claxton.]

army and air force, there is a substantial item, in most cases running into several million dollars, for sundries. In the detail those sundries are said to include printing and stationery, postage, and miscellaneous items. According to the public accounts for 1948-49, the items making up these sundries were given in some detail, and none of them amount to as much as \$2 million or \$3 million. Will the minister say whether it would be possible, and whether he will agree in future years, to give some break-down of the sundry item instead of just indicating some of the things which go into it? He could say how much the department estimates the expenditure on printing and stationery will be, and how much for postage. Then we would know that. When they do get down to some of the small things—one time I believe in one department we had laundry mentioned—they could more properly be described as sundries, and not set out in detail. I do not think it is proper accounting to ask us to approve an item as we have under departmental administration of \$783,000 for sundries. Can the minister say whether that will be done in another year?

**Mr. Claxton:** I would certainly be glad to discuss that with the officers; that is one of the heads we believe capable of further break-down. There are others which I may as well mention, such as maintenance and construction of properties; different types of equipment, and so on. We believe that we could give further details now with some accuracy and without too much curtailment. I can give a break-down of sundries if the hon. member wants it.

**Mr. Fulton:** Will the minister do it for this item of departmental administration?

**Mr. Claxton:** Yes. They are given in the public accounts, as the hon. member knows. There is printing, stationery and office equipment, \$126,000; communication services, \$50,000; book of remembrance, \$17,000; transportation, \$3,000; government officers guarantee fund, \$8,600; legal fees and patent applications \$4,000; miscellaneous expenses, \$5,000; miscellaneous expenses, \$2,000; training equipment and films, \$20,000; then, unallotted, \$338,277 that is the sundries; directorate of public relations miscellaneous expenses, \$5,000; inspection services by contract to meet urgent requirements, \$200,000; contingencies, \$5,000. The total is \$783,827.

**Mr. Fulton:** I appreciate that to do that under every heading would perhaps expand the volume of the estimates, but I think that should be done in future years. I was glad to hear the minister say—