

Mr. Fraser: Where are they advertised?

Mr. Howe: In the locality, if it is a local purchase; or in the trade journals, if it is a national purchase.

Mr. Skey: The hon. member for Peterborough West has just asked one question that I wanted to put to the minister. Going back to the questions asked by the hon. member for Muskoka-Ontario, can the minister's parliamentary assistant tell us what they purchased for the United Kingdom government last year? What was the big item in those purchases?

Mr. McIlraith: Aircraft was the largest item but for the United Kingdom it is relatively small.

Mr. Skey: What were the items?

Mr. McIlraith: Aircraft, fertilizer, communications and electrical equipment and medical stores. They are all relatively small.

Mr. Skey: What were those figures?

Mr. McIlraith: I have not the detail. It is relatively small. The largest is \$26,000. That would be aircraft spares of some sort.

Mr. Skey: Would that be de Havilland?

Mr. McIlraith: It is a \$26,000 item. I have not the detail of it.

Mr. Skey: I have one further question. When one of the branches of the Department of National Defence puts through a requisition to this corporation, do they give you specifications on that requisition?

Mr. Howe: Yes. It is the function of the Department of National Defence to draw their own specifications. In other words, the Canadian Commercial Corporation has nothing to do with the specifications or the design of a defence purchase. That is the responsibility of the defence department. The design and the specifications are sent to the Canadian Commercial Corporation. It then becomes the duty of the corporation to buy exactly what is specified. After the purchase is made it is the duty of the Department of National Defence to certify the receipt of it and to attend to the inspection.

Mr. Hackett: Will the minister say whether fertilizer was purchased or sold?

Mr. McIlraith: I know it was exported to the United Kingdom. That is the fertilizer that was referred to in the previous question by the hon. member for Trinity?

Mr. Hackett: Yes.

Mr. McIlraith: Yes. It was exported to the United Kingdom. That is a small item—\$11,250.

Canadian Commercial Corporation

Mr. Timmins: Will the minister tell us what was purchased from the United States? I notice that was one of the countries in the list of countries mentioned a few minutes ago.

Mr. McIlraith: I can give a list of the articles purchased for export to the United States. They are medical supplies, fish, clothing, automotive equipment, instruments and photographic equipment, hardware, fertilizers, food, communications and electrical equipment, agricultural equipment, industrial equipment and some petroleum products.

Mr. Timmins: All those articles would seem to be such as would be in everyday commercial trade and commerce. Is there any special reason why this corporation should be in those types of business which would be normal processes of trade?

Mr. Howe: These are all purchases by the United States for export to foreign countries. They are purchases by some agency of the United States, either defence services or some other relief agency. During the last seven or eight years first the Department of Munitions and Supply and later the Canadian Commercial Corporation have maintained an office in Washington to handle purchases in Canada of that type for United States government agencies.

Mr. Skey: Would the minister tell us the procedure followed when the corporation is approached by a foreign government and asked to buy something in Canada? What I have in mind is this: Does the minister have to meet specifications for each of those countries, or has he the power to select the companies in Canada which will produce these articles for the foreign country?

Mr. Howe: The duty of the corporation is to buy what the foreign government wants. We buy it as well as we can. If it is something for which tenders can be called, then they are called. If not, the purchases are made from the source best able to fill the order.

Mr. Skey: From anyone who comes along or anyone you may choose to call?

Mr. Howe: Well now, remember this, that we have been buying about \$14 billion worth of goods, and we know something about buying.

Mr. Hackett: In the report brought down on March 31, 1948, I notice on the second page the following paragraph:

From April 1, 1947 to March 31, 1948, more than 45,000 contracts were placed by the corporation for the purchase of stores for the Department of National Defence. These stores had a total estimated