

Supply—Secretary of State

position. If the total value is \$35,000, then according to this Queen's University would receive roughly a little over \$1,000 worth of government publications a year. Even according to the value stamped on government publications in the government catalogue that is an incredibly low figure. Just think of every publication from the dominion bureau of statistics. They have a value of anywhere from 10 cents to \$2, and that library will receive all of them. We all know the amount of publishing the bureau does. My point is that this figure is extraordinarily low, and I should like a fuller explanation as to how it is arrived at.

Mr. Courtemanche: The total amount represents all the publications that are distributed free but charged to our department at cost. That is the only part of the question I can answer.

Mr. Fisher: Have some charges made to government departments for printing work let to outside contractors been challenged by the departments concerned, and has the queen's printer reduced the charge to the said departments and covered the loss by charges to other departments or by drawing on the revolving fund authorized by parliament? I have specific reference to complaints from the Post Office Department in the past few years.

Mr. Courtemanche: May I ask the hon. member to repeat his question?

Mr. Fisher: Have some charges made to government departments for printing work let to outside contractors been challenged by the departments concerned, and has the queen's printer reduced the charge to the said departments and covered the loss by charges to other departments or by drawing on the revolving fund authorized by parliament? I have specific reference to complaints from the Post Office Department in the past few years.

Mr. Courtemanche: The answer is no.

Mr. Winch: The answer is no? Mr. Chairman, has the minister at no time read the Auditor General's report or his statements to the effect that this has occurred with particular reference to the Post Office Department; that in very recent years the post office was given a charge on something that was let by the queen's printer on a contract and they challenged that, and the queen's printer according not only to the Auditor General's report but to other information did reduce the price below that which the queen's printer actually paid the outside contractor? Surely the minister would like to reconsider his answer when he said no.

Mr. Herridge: Neophyte in the woodpile.

Mr. Peters: Fire the officials. Poor answer.

Mr. Courtemanche: Can the hon. member tell me the amount involved? I am informed that it was a case that happened two years ago, and my officials do not remember the details exactly. If the hon. member can refresh my memory I may be able to answer.

Mr. Winch: No, I cannot do that on the exact amount involved. I did not expect this question nor the answer of the minister but certainly, sir, the evidence in the report and statement of the Auditor General shows that he is very much disturbed over this practice of the queen's printer.

Mr. Courtemanche: I am informed that it is not the practice. It may have happened two years ago, but it has not happened this year.

Mr. Fisher: My next question is in the same general area and has to do with the reply I received to another question I placed on the order paper. The question reads:

What criteria does the queen's printer apply in deciding on the selling price of a publication sponsored by a department?

The answer I received was:

Cost of printing.

Now, this is rather an oversimplification, and I want to point up the oversimplification by reading the answers I received to two other questions. The other questions were:

What arrangements are made with departments for rebates or alteration of price charged by the queen's printer where publications have a larger sale than anticipated through the queen's printer?

The answer to that question was "None".

My next question was:

If a publication does not sell up to its printing, how is this failure reflected in charges to the department concerned?

The whole problem here relates to the cost charged to government departments for the printing done by the queen's printer. The people who brought these complaints to me I think have very good reasons for feeling that they do not get the kind of service they want from the queen's printer, but that is not the point at issue here. As far as I am concerned I do not like the set-up of the charges; they are very fixed and definite. Some people may say that it does not matter, it is all part of the government whether it is a department or the queen's printer; but I think a department should know much more accurately than that the exact cost of what is printed for it by the queen's printer. If a department comes up with a best seller or something that has a very wide sale or distribution it should be reflected somehow to the department's credit. There is no reason at all why it cannot be.