

Supply—Post Office

that very thing. We do not have the practice in Canada of leaving the minister free to spend money from whatever surplus there may be. He must seek authority from parliament to do that, and this is what he is doing.

Mr. Hodgson: I may be wrong, but I understand that the Post Office Department is considering giving the mail carriers an increase on a percentage basis, where some are lower than others for the same area and with the same number of boxes, etc. Perhaps there is some provision in this item for that; is that right?

Mr. Harris: That is correct.

Mr. White (Middlesex East): Do I understand from the minister that some of these funds will be used to readjust contracts let last fall; say September, October and November?

Mr. Harris: That is right.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): Mr. Chairman, I want a little information from the Minister of Finance. I cannot find the exact reference in *Hansard*, but several days ago on the discussion of his estimates the Postmaster General gave us to understand that according to the estimates for 1957-58 as presented to the house originally, the anticipated surplus of his department would be some \$8,200,000. He then drew to our attention certain anticipated expenditures which he felt would reduce that surplus to some \$6 million. That was his estimate as it stood at that time. Actually we have an item of \$3,900,000 odd here, and am I to understand in the light of this information that this would be a deduction from the first estimate of \$8,200,000?

Mr. Harris: No, Mr. Chairman. The \$8,200,000 which later became \$6 million is the situation with respect to this year, without regard to the payment being provided for here, which stands by itself. So with this payment, which represents our best estimate of what we are going to spend on these things, it goes in one side and out the other, leaving the net result the same.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): Even if it goes in one side and out the other, \$8,200,000 minus roughly \$4 million leaves a net of \$4,200,000, does it not, Mr. Chairman; and is that not the situation here?

Mr. Harris: The money is not in the hands of the Postmaster General yet, and will not be until this vote is approved. If it is approved it will then be paid out to the various persons indicated here—rural mail carriers and railway companies and the like

—so it is not taken into account at all in the figures given the other day.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): Well, that is my point. At the point where this money is paid to the Postmaster General and he pays it out to the transportation companies, his expenditures would be increased by the amount of shall we say \$4 million?

Mr. Harris: That is right.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): And his revenue would be reduced from \$8,200,000, which was his estimate before these supplementary estimates were introduced, to some \$4,200,000, which would be his estimate after the supplementary estimate was introduced?

Mr. Harris: Yes, if my hon. friend is referring to the revenues of the office irrespective of the vote the government gives.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): Do we understand that this entire sum would be paid out in the current fiscal year?

Mr. Harris: With the additional book-keeping which is done by the government in the month of April, I should think a considerable part, if not all, would be paid out.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): I have just one further question to confirm the fact. In the light of the information before him does the minister agree that the net surplus of the post office would now be expected to be about \$4 million or slightly over?

Mr. Harris: No, Mr. Chairman, I do not. I find it difficult to understand the point that is being made. As I understand it the revenues are the revenues from the sale of stamps and sundry other services. If the Postmaster General the other day gave the figure of about \$6 million as his net surplus of revenue over expenditures, and if he excluded this item from it in his computations, then it seems to me when it is all over and done the \$6 million still stands.

Item agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC PRINTING
AND STATIONERY

583. To provide for reimbursement of the Queen's printers advance account for the value of stores which have become obsolete, unserviceable, lost or destroyed, \$116,050.

Mr. Nesbitt: This would seem to be a rather large amount and one which you would think probably should have been looked after in the original estimates. Can the minister tell us whether the \$116,050 was an unexpected account which has arisen because of some unusual contingency?