

Department of Transport Stores

The inventory as at March 31, 1950, was approximately \$3 million, as I have already indicated, while the value of stores issued in the preceding twelve months was \$8 million. That is the answer that I gave to the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra a moment ago.

The hon. member for Greenwood asked another question: "To what extent has Mr. Howe's promise of 1937 to eliminate surplus stocks been carried out; also to what extent are we piling up stocks in any way?" Inventory value as at March 31, 1937, was \$957,368. The record shows that the value of the stores inventory as at March 31, 1939, two years later, was \$876,877, or approximately \$81,000 less than two years previously. The inventory value today—by "today" I mean March 31, 1950—exclusive of Newfoundland, was \$2,059,730. And that of course, as already stated, was owing to the increase in prices from that date to this, and also to the addition of new divisions in the department.

Mr. Green: What is the Newfoundland figure today?

Mr. Chevrier: It is roughly \$1 million.

Mr. Higgins: It was \$1,180,000.

Mr. Chevrier: I say roughly \$1 million.

Mr. Green: I understand it has been cut by several hundred thousands.

Mr. Chevrier: I will give that in a moment. I have it all here. I propose to answer most of the questions that were asked at the last sitting.

The hon. member for Greenwood asked: "To what extent have we got stock that is piling up and perhaps should be cleared out?" The answer is that with the exception of stores taken over in Newfoundland a year ago it is estimated that the value of stores inactive and unserviceable and obsolete in nature at the present is about \$20,000. That is only about one per cent of the inventory value as at March 31, 1950, excluding Newfoundland stocks.

The hon. member for Greenwood wanted to get some kind of statement—not in exhaustive detail—as to what there is in stores now. I have quite a lengthy statement. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman wants me to put it on the record. Perhaps I can give some of the main divisions which will give an answer to what he wants.

For instance, in canals the divisions are something like this: general hardware and tools, metals, paints, spare parts, lumber, lubricants and fuel. In marine and radio the division is: general hardware and tools, metals, steamer supplies, lighthouse supplies,

[Mr. Chevrier.]

paints, lubricants and fuel. In radio stations and airports the division is: general hardware and tools, radio equipment, parts and accessories, airport spare parts, accessories and miscellaneous supplies. In meteorological, the division is scientific instruments and miscellaneous supplies.

There is another long classification that I have, composed of twenty-seven different items, which are made up of iron, steel and other metals, castings, pipe and fittings of all kinds, tools, and so forth. Then there is a break-down of one of the depots in the canal service at Lachine.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I do not think we will need to proceed any further unless we get into difficulties with the minister.

Mr. Chevrier: I hope my hon. friend will not. I am the most co-operative minister in the house.

There was another question asked by the hon. member for Greenwood which I think is important and which should be clarified. He wanted to know why we buy all these different stores and carry them in stock when they might be purchased without delay in the ordinary course of merchandising. We buy in large quantities, and we like to buy in large quantities because we save substantial sums of money. For instance, by buying 5,000 gallons of anti-freeze for the various depots rather than buying it piecemeal for each requisition we save \$2 per gallon. If we buy 10,000 gallons of paint in one lot we save \$2 per gallon over the retail price. The same thing can be said of manila rope, white lead, binoculars, and so on.

The hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra wanted to know by how much the department had exceeded the advances of \$1 million authorized by the present act. The present act provides in effect for a capital fund of \$1,957,368, composed of the April 1, 1937, inventory, \$957,368, and \$1 million which was authorized as advances to the Minister of Transport. That inventory, exclusive of Newfoundland stores, as of March 31, 1950, stood at \$2,059,000.

Mr. Green: What about the increases? There were amendments to the act in 1939 and in 1946, in each case increasing the amounts that could be held in stores.

Mr. Chevrier: The inventory as at March 31, 1950, exclusive of Newfoundland stores, was about \$2,059,000. Therefore the advances were exceeded by \$102,000 at that date. In the previous year, March 31, 1949, the advances were exceeded by \$72,491, exclusive of Newfoundland stores. Then on April 1, 1949, the Newfoundland stores inventory was