

Mr. MacNAUGHT: Before we go into the Department of Labour estimates there is a matter I should like to bring up. The page boys have been here since nine o'clock this morning, and perhaps they could go home now.

The CHAIRMAN: I will bring the matter to the attention of Mr. Speaker. I am sure he will be in complete accord, if it is possible to dispense with their service, that important service which they render from day to day.

Mr. GRAYDON: We do not know what we would do without them.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

109. Departmental administration, \$755,967.

Mr. MacINNIS: I wonder whether the minister intends to make a statement.

Hon. HUMPHREY MITCHELL (Minister of Labour): On what?

Mr. MacINNIS: In regard to his department. I am not suggesting or asking that he should, but I am going to say something, and I would not as a matter of courtesy step in ahead of him.

Mr. MITCHELL: I have a statement prepared. I have not it here, but if my hon. friend will wait a couple of minutes I will get it. It will take forty minutes to read.

Mr. GRAYDON: Perhaps the two of you would arrange a saw-off.

Mr. MITCHELL: No; I have no objection, if my hon. friend wants me to read it.

Mr. MacINNIS: No. I only wanted to know if the minister had a statement to make; I did not want to butt in.

Mr. MITCHELL: I had a prepared statement, but I thought, in view of the pressure of business, I should not read it.

Mr. LENNARD: The minister has been making statements all session up to date.

Mr. BRACKEN: I am not suggesting that the Minister of Labour should make a 40-minute speech, or that any minister when he introduces his estimates should make a long speech. But perhaps I may be permitted to take half a minute to say one thing. When ministers introduce their estimates they ought to give us information, at least in brief, outlining any substantial changes in policy that have been made, or any new matters of importance which have arisen and are being

[Mr. St. Laurent.]

provided for. What we are doing now in this committee is voting away the taxpayers' money. The position we are in is that the government, through a minister, is asking for the right to spend the taxpayers' money. I am not objecting, under the circumstances, to the speed with which the estimates have gone through to-night; but I would suggest that the minister, without giving us a 40-minute speech, should say briefly what his estimates contain, how they compare with last year, what changes there have been, what new policies there are, if any, what branches, if any, have been omitted, if the estimates are larger, why, and so on. Such a brief and informative statement would at least give the committee a little idea of how the department is proposed to be carried on during the present year as compared with last year.

Mr. MITCHELL: I think you can do it in fifteen minutes if there are no interruptions.

Mr. KNOWLES: It all depends on what is in it.

Mr. MITCHELL: All right. This is a free country; the sky is the limit. Notwithstanding my hon. friend, I think I have the best department in the government.

Mr. GRAYDON: Look who the minister is.

Mr. MITCHELL: They have brought me in the wrong statement, so I must do it by memory. I have a vivid recollection that the late Hon. W. R. Motherwell was accustomed to come into the House of Commons with no more than the book of estimates and to pilot his estimates through without the assistance of anyone in front of him, and he probably did a better job than those who had piles of books in front of them and made long speeches.

The Department of Labour, of course, has many divisions. First of all, there is the administration division. Then there is the division dealing with labour conciliation which, of course, takes into its ambit the war labour boards of the different provinces and also the national war labour board.

We have taken under our jurisdiction the training of soldiers from the Department of Veterans Affairs, which in itself is quite a large operation. Then we have jurisdiction over prisoners of war, which is drawing to its close, but which, during its administration, has assisted greatly the lumber interests of Canada and also the farmers, particularly the beet growing industries of Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario. May I say that its operation has brought a profit to the treasury in excess of \$2,225,000. Then the Japanese come under