

Supply—Finance

provided by this act, but also all farmers, whether or not they were good risks in the eyes of the banks, who are using the facilities provided under the act.

Item agreed to.

Expenses of the Royal Canadian Mint and the assay office, Vancouver, B.C.—

118. Administration, operation and maintenance, \$1,050,181.

Mr. Pearkes: I should like to know whether this is the Royal Canadian Mint here in Ottawa and an assay office in Vancouver, or whether it is a branch of the Royal Canadian Mint in Vancouver.

Mr. Harris: It is both. The mint is in Ottawa. The assay office was in Vancouver until I closed it in the interests of economy, on the 31st of March.

Mr. Pearkes: There is no assay office in Vancouver now?

Mr. Harris: No.

Mr. Pearkes: Where have they moved to?

Mr. Harris: Ottawa.

Mr. Pearkes: Is that the only assay office in Canada now?

Mr. Harris: Yes.

Mr. Pearkes: In view of the importance of the mining industry in British Columbia and the proximity of the smelter at Trail and for various other reasons, I have had numerous complaints sent to me about the closing of this assay office. I do not know whether it is too late for the minister to reconsider this decision he has made, but I can assure him it is causing inconvenience on the west coast.

Mr. Harris: We gave careful consideration to this. We considered the amount of work that had been done there and the amount that was likely to be done. Since we closed the office I have not had a protest. If my hon. friend will send his protest to me I shall be glad to look at it.

Item agreed to.

119. Construction or acquisition of new equipment, \$268,970.

Mr. Macdonnell: At the top of page 21 there is a reduction of \$6 million in the item of annual amortization of bond discount, premiums and commissions. Could the minister explain how that large amount has arisen?

Mr. Harris: This is not under item 119. This is a statutory item, as I understand it, having to do with the annual amortization of bond discount, premiums and commissions. We do not vote that; it is statutory.

[Mr. Ellis.]

Mr. Macdonnell: I was merely asking for the explanation of the reduction of \$6 million.

Mr. Harris: The cost of amortization has dropped by that amount.

Item agreed to.

Grants to universities—

126. To provide grants to institutions of higher learning recognized in each province by the government of Canada and the government of the province as being universities or institutions of equivalent standing equal to an amount, for each province, not exceeding 50 cents per head of its population as certified by the dominion bureau of statistics divided among the recognized institutions of the province proportionately to their enrolment of full time intramural students in personal attendance at the recognized institution or at an institution in the same province affiliated with it who are registered in courses of university level recognized as leading to and counting year for year toward a university degree awarded by a university in Canada and the Minister of Finance may for this purpose more particularly define the terms "university level" and "university degree", \$7,800,000.

Mr. Knight: The university grants have given an impetus and encouragement to the universities the like of which they have certainly never had before in my time. One should congratulate the government for giving and maintaining those grants. I shall not go into the situation or even discuss the fact that some of those grants are not apparently welcome in certain quarters, because there is a whole constitutional issue in which I do not want to get mixed up at this late date. But it is sure that the increased fees that would be necessarily charged by the universities if these grants were not in existence would preclude the education of many people who are now enjoying such an education owing to the existence of these grants.

The grants make it easier for those with less funds, and I am interested in this angle of the question. They make it easier for those families with less money to spend to send some of their members to university. In that regard it is an excellent piece of social legislation, because it should not be anyone's aim that a university education should be the prerogative of any one class, and when I say "class" I am speaking in terms of money available to the family.

Attendance at university even now, of course, entails sacrifice on the part of members of the family concerned. It is a common fallacy that high school education, for instance, is free to those who are concerned. It is not just a matter of the fact that there are no fees for those people who are attending our high schools, because there are things like food, clothing and transportation which must be taken into consideration. Statistics prove that the amount of money which comes