

Supply—Federal District Commission

I suggest that provides pretty effective control over the progressive implementation of the plan.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): As it is we are now asked to vote \$2,500,000. I understand that is toward a fund which is accumulating and will be used for the carrying out of the plan. Would it be possible in future to have something in the nature of a progress statement—and when I say “progress” I am not referring to the actual work, but rather to progress in what is contemplated. We would have from time to time in that way some information as to just what stage we have reached when we are asked to vote money.

Mr. St. Laurent: There is an annual report filed with the governor in council and tabled in parliament.

Item agreed to.

Federal district commission—

280. To authorize payment of the third instalment to a special account in the consolidated revenue fund, known as the national capital fund, established under vote No. 809, Appropriation Act, No. 4, 1947-48, \$2,500,000.

Mr. Knowles: Has any of this money put into this fund been spent, or is the full amount on hand? I take it the total amount that has been put in is \$7,500,000, or at least this vote will bring it to that amount.

Mr. St. Laurent: I am sorry I have not the capital account here. I have information with me respecting receipts and expenditures during the course of the last year. However, I have not the information as to the capital account showing what amounts of the three grants of \$2,500,000 have been expended, and what amounts still remain.

Mr. Knowles: I take it that some of the money has been spent out of the capital fund, as well as the running expenses we voted in the last item?

Mr. St. Laurent: I think that is correct.

Mr. Fleming: What were the expenditures last year? I understood the Prime Minister to say that he had with him an account of the expenditures made against the national capital fund.

Mr. St. Laurent: No, if I gave that impression I was wrong. I have expenditures of the maintenance vote of the statutory sum of \$300,000, and of the expenses of the national committee. I have not the expenditures made out of the capital grant of \$2,500,000.

Mr. Fleming: Are expenditures being made out of that fund or is it being accumulated? Apparently this is the third of three annual instalments of \$2,500,000 each.

[Mr. St. Laurent.]

Mr. St. Laurent: I shall have to secure that information. I can get a statement for the hon. member as to what capital expenditures have been made out of these grants. I have not the information with me.

Item agreed to.

Governor general and lieutenant governors—

130. Office of the secretary to the governor general, including the salary of the secretary to the governor general at \$7,600 additional to salary authorized by R.S.C. chapter 182, \$117,065.

Mr. Knowles: There is one question I should like to ask the Prime Minister, and I am asking it under this item, not because I wish to highlight the particular case referred to here, but because I have in mind a number of other cases similar to it. I refer particularly to the comment of the Auditor General with relation to items in the estimates such as this which legislate and in some cases have the effect of varying the provisions of statutes. If I may say so, I note that the Prime Minister has been responsible for tidying up a number of things like this, and it would seem to me that the suggestion of the Auditor General would appeal to him.

The Auditor General points out that in this instance, as with the salaries of the civil service commissioners, the statute sets the salaries and then an additional amount is provided by this kind of item. The Auditor General suggests that the proper course to follow would be to amend the appropriate statute. I wonder if the Prime Minister agrees with the Auditor General and with me on that point?

Mr. St. Laurent: I certainly do. I shall be happy when we can arrange things so that we shall be asking parliament to legislate under the appropriate acts.

Mr. Knowles: To show my appreciation of the comment just made by the Prime Minister I shall not raise the other cases I had in mind. I express the hope, however, that he will have his officials look at all the items referred to in the Auditor General's memorandum.

Mr. St. Laurent: We have already discussed these matters, and hope to do what the hon. member has suggested should be done in the way of cleaning up some of these practices, which, while not reprehensible, are not the way we hope to be doing them in due course.

Item agreed to.

*LEGISLATION**House of Commons—*

175. General administration—estimates of the clerk, \$873,335.

Mr. Knowles: I should like to ask one or two questions of His Honour, who I believe