

Interim Supply

shorter distances and also the means of helping out our defence program.

I think the proper system to pursue would be for this government to set up a commission to help co-ordinate the work in the different provinces. I hope that no time will be lost in having that done.

Having said that, I want to suggest again that those officials be charged with placing the highway through the central part of the western provinces where it would do more good, because the highway can be used more months of the year. There is less snowfall there, and at the same time it would help to build up our defence program.

Motion agreed to and the house went into supply, Mr. Golding in the chair.

Mr. Abbott: I think it was understood that we would open two departments by calling one item in each, and the items would be allowed to stand, and then I would proceed with my interim supply.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

1. Departmental administration, \$282,160.

Item stands.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

51. Departmental administration, \$2,170,510.

Item stands.

Progress reported.

INTERIM SUPPLY

Hon. Douglas Abbott (Minister of Finance) moved that the house go into committee of supply.

Motion agreed to, and the house went into committee, Mr. Golding in the chair.

Mr. Abbott moved:

Resolved, that a sum not exceeding \$230,145,541, being one-sixth of the amount of each of the several items to be voted, as set forth in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending 31st March, 1950, laid before the House of Commons at the present session of parliament, and in addition thereto the sum of \$1,791,333.33, being one-third of the amount of certain items, the sum of \$301,339.50, being one-sixth of the amount of certain items, and the sum of \$2,168,752.75, being one-twelfth of the amount of certain items of the said estimates be granted to His Majesty on account for the fiscal year ending 31st March, 1950.

He said: Mr. Chairman, the bill which I shall ask the house to pass a little later is in identical terms with the bill which was passed at the same stage last year. I am asking for the same supply, namely, one-sixth of all the main items, an additional one-third of two special items, namely, the freight assistance on western feed grains, in agriculture, and the item in the trade and commerce estimates for the Canadian national

[Mr. Fair.]

trade fair, the disbursements of which have to be made within the next month or two; an additional one-sixth of certain other special items which are similar to items for which we asked the extra one-sixth last year, external affairs, Canadian representation at international conferences, item 57. And there are two legislation items, the Senate and the House of Commons. As members of the committee realize, the major portion of the expenditures for the House of Commons and the Senate comes in the early months of the year. And there is an additional one-twelfth of the six or seven items in agriculture, external affairs and mines and resources covering, speaking generally, the experimental farm service, where the heaviest payments come in the early part of the year. There are external affairs, representation abroad, where additional funds are required to finance various missions abroad in the early part of the year. And in mines and resources it refers chiefly to geological surveys, forest conservation and national parks where we have survey parties who go out early in the year. As in past years, a substantial part of the vote is made in the early part of the year.

The total amount asked as interim supply is \$230,145,541, being one-sixth of the main estimates, together with the additional sums to which I have referred, namely \$1,791,333.33, \$301,339.50 and \$2,168,752.75.

As I have said, the form of this bill is exactly the same as in previous years, and the passing of the bill does not prejudice the rights and privileges of members of the House of Commons to criticize any of the individual items in the estimates. And I give the usual undertaking that such rights and privileges will be respected and will not be curtailed or restricted in any way as a result of passing this interim supply measure.

Mr. Knowles: Do I understand the minister to say that he was not in any respect asking for any more than he asked at this time last year?

Mr. Abbott: I think it is actually somewhat less. One or two of the items for which we are asking an additional one-sixth may be slightly different. I have not the details here; but we asked for an additional amount for freight assistance on western feed grains for the reason that the amount voted only goes to the end of the current crop year in the main estimates. Therefore we are only asking for four months. To ask for one-sixth would not be sufficient because the amount required each month is considerably more than that.

The other items are self-explanatory. They are all items where the major or greater part