

Supply—Post Office

As far as intimating something here an hour or so ago to one or two members is concerned, that hardly seems to me to be an intimation to this house of 265 members that the Post Office Department was to be considered. Very few members knew. As a matter of fact I did not know myself, and I do not think other members over here knew.

We should like very much to meet the wishes of the government, and we usually do so; but under the circumstances we are not prepared to do so in this instance. As I say, there are members who are away and who are greatly interested in the Post Office Department. They would like to be here when those estimates are taken up.

Mr. Harris: But there are members who are here.

Mr. Brooks: For the sake of 40 minutes we do not feel that we can give unanimous consent. I am sorry, but we do not feel that we can do so.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might make another suggestion in the hope that it might be acceptable all round. Would it be possible for hon. members to agree to go into committee of supply and deal with the post office estimates, on the understanding that the first item would not be carried tonight? There are members here who are prepared to deal with some matters on the first item. It would mean a little progress if some of these remarks could be made. I realize that it is difficult to play the role of a peacemaker after some of the things that have been said, but at any rate I am trying.

Mr. Victor Quelch (Acadia): Mr. Speaker, we did not hear anything about the Post Office Department being taken up. However, we are quite agreeable to taking up the post office estimates and following the suggestion made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre that the first item remain before the committee.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Applewhaite): Under the circumstances is there unanimous consent for the house to resolve itself into committee of supply?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Applewhaite): I want to make it clear that, as occupant of the chair, I am not trying to lead the house. I would suggest that I hear a conglomeration of sounds. Could I perhaps put it this way so we will know whether or not there is unanimous consent. Is there opposition to the house resolving itself into committee of supply?

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Churchill: To what are we agreeing? Has there been agreement on the part of the leader of the house on the government side that the first item of the Post Office Department shall not be passed tonight?

Mr. Casselman: No, there is no agreement.

Mr. Harris: Mr. Speaker, I do not think you can expect that I would engage myself to do that if it happened that hon. members opposite came to the end of their remarks and did not want to proceed with them.

Mr. Harkness: Oh, we cannot agree to that.

Mr. Brooks: It is just a supposition.

Mr. Harris: It seems to me that in all probability we will have speeches on the first item that will last at least until tomorrow or until Friday. Under those circumstances I do not expect the first item to be passed. But should it happen that hon. members opposite exhaust their activities before ten o'clock, I will move the adjournment before item 1 is carried.

Mr. Knowles: That is fair enough.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Applewhaite): It being unanimously consented to, the house will resolve itself again into committee of supply.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The house in committee of supply, Mr. Applewhaite in the chair.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

333. Departmental administration, including an amount of \$250,000 to defray the expenses of the 1957 congress of the universal postal union to be held in Ottawa, \$2,091,516.

Mr. Bryce: Mr. Chairman, I have just a small matter I want to bring to the attention of the minister. I wrote to the minister on November 27 last year concerning the Petersfield rural route outside of Winnipeg. As I tried to explain, the trouble there is that the mail arrives at the post office at 10.30. It is sorted and ready to be delivered by 11.30, but it stays in the post office at Petersfield until the next day, when it is delivered.

What I was asking the minister to do was to see if some arrangements could be made whereby the mail would be delivered on the day it arrived from Winnipeg. That is all I was asking and I have not got any satisfaction, other than that the minister told me he would look into the matter. If he has looked into it and it cannot be done, then I want to know, because I want to bring some more evidence to show that it can be done.