

*Supply—National Revenue*

humanly possible in order to give the industry all the safeguards and protection which it could possibly receive.

The hon. member for Port Arthur raised a perennial question about which we have had many interesting discussions, the question of censorship. He asked if new instructions had been sent out to our port officers recently in connection with this matter. I can tell him no such instructions have gone out. The administration is exactly the same as it was at that time. It is an interesting problem as to what our position will be as decisions come out, become codified and the law becomes clear. We welcome that because it is a nasty situation in which one finds himself as the ultimate, in one sense, censor. It must be remembered that this only applies to periodicals coming across the border. It does not apply to anything printed in this country. It does not apply to anything on sale in the bookstores. It is only when books come through the customs house that we have a responsibility, and we are attempting to carry it out in the best way possible.

**Mr. Fisher:** If I may summarize, then, there has been no change at all in the work of the minister's officials in this particular field as a result of the legislative change last year?

**Mr. Nowlan:** No, the legislative change last year was concerned with administration within Canada. Our responsibility is for goods coming into the country. Obviously there has to be a close correlation between the two. We have made no change in the instructions issued to our officials up to the present time.

**Mr. Pearson:** May I ask another question before the minister proceeds. Am I not correct in my recollection that a couple of sessions ago the minister expressed a rather determined desire to free himself from this responsibility of censorship? Can he tell the committee whether any progress has been made toward that desirable objective?

**Mr. Nowlan:** I am afraid the progress has not been as great as the minister would like. There have been discussions between my department and the Department of Justice and the respective ministers thereof. I was very hopeful that some section could be worked out which would relieve this department entirely of any responsibility in connection with the matter. I am told that this is a matter of common practice, of common law, and I guess virtually every jurisdiction in the world which has a customs act has to deal with this problem. Every once in a while we do get books coming through customs and if you dropped them on the floor you

[Mr. Nowlan.]

would have to clean them up with a shovel. These items do not present a great deal of difficulty. Beyond these the activities of the department have been of a very limited nature and I trust they will always continue to be.

**Mr. Pearson:** The minister will recall the strong criticism levelled at his predecessor because the government of that day was not able to get rid of that responsibility which the minister of national revenue was exercising. Indeed, he was accused of being rather happy in the exercise of it, which was not true. It did add to his library, but I do not know whether it has served to add to the minister's library?

**Mr. Nowlan:** No, I have been very careful, I must say, as to the ultimate destination of these books. I can assure you that they are all returned to the deputy minister, and no further inquiry is made. Of course, they only come to me when they have the signature of the deputy minister. In the first place they come through the port officials and finally to the deputy minister. If there is any disagreement about the decision then the book comes to me. I sometimes read of very interesting books in the newspapers and wonder why they do not get to my desk, and I sometimes wonder what would happen if they did. However, it is sometimes my unpleasant responsibility to read these books.

**Mr. Pearson:** Is it not regrettably true that the deputy minister is soon to acquire a lot of time which he could use for this purpose?

**Mr. Nowlan:** I will not pass any judgment on that, Mr. Chairman.

I think, too, the hon. member for Port Arthur raised a question about the closing of some ports. He could not understand why the revenue in some cases appeared to be very small and yet the ports would be kept open, whereas in other cases the revenue seemed to be larger and the ports were closed. It is very difficult to lay down any hard and fast rule with respect to these matters. The matter of port administration is always under review. It is true that we have closed some ports, and it is true that we will probably close some more. I get recommendations from time to time from our committee on port administration dealing with these matters, and one has to face these facts.

I pointed out earlier the reduction we had made in our expenditures. This has not been accomplished to any great extent by the closing of ports, but it is in keeping with the efficiency with which we have carried out this division of our responsibility and sometimes, unfortunately, we have to do that. One cannot measure it entirely, although it is a