

Public Printing and Stationery Act

keep these accounts down to a reasonable amount. The \$2,229,000 is much too large.

It must also be borne in mind that this money is not going out of the control of the government. The money is in the various departments which have received grants of the sums they require to pay us for supplies. They simply pass it to us and we pass it into consolidated revenue. That movement is not fast enough to permit us to pay the outside bills we owe, which I think we should pay at the earliest possible date.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): So do I, but I still want to know why this \$3,786,000 cannot be paid. Can the minister give us a list of the departments that owe money so that we may see why these accounts cannot be settled. Is there any earthly reason why these bills cannot be paid? I presume these government departments are solvent and able to pay their debts, and this amount of \$3,786,000 should be paid. If this were private business they would certainly stir things up and get paid because they would not be able to go and ask somebody else for \$2 million.

Mr. Bradley: I am not in position to answer my hon. friend's question because I am not familiar with the affairs of other government departments. The only thing I can say is that we have not received the money from them and are continuously in debt to outside suppliers because of that fact. As I have pointed out, this is nothing new. It is not a question of cash getting out of control of the government in any way, shape or form. It is merely a matter of internal arrangement. It seems to have worked out satisfactorily. I cannot give you the details at all because I do not know them.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Well, we want them.

Mr. Bradley: I am not able to give them to you.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I agree with the minister it is nothing new, but it is something new that we want. Unless there is some reason against it we want a sensible arrangement whereby this money will be collected. The minister says he does not know why. He has not the details. He cannot give us particulars. I think we should get particulars. For instance, if the Minister of Public Works owes him a lot of money let him pay it. I should like to know who these ministers are who will not pay their debts. Is that not a reasonable suggestion, Mr. Chairman?

The Deputy Chairman: Shall the clause carry?

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): No, it is not carried. I am waiting for information, Mr. Chairman. It is not carried; as long as I can stand up it is not carried.

An hon. Member: That will not be long.

Mr. Knowles: For example, can the Secretary of State tell us whether his own department owes any money to the printing bureau?

Mr. Bradley: At the moment I cannot tell you.

Mr. Lennard: Surely he should know that.

Mr. Knowles: Can the Minister of Public Works tell us whether his department owes the king's printer any money?

Mr. Fournier (Hull): Perhaps we do not owe money right now. We are having reports printed, but when the bills come in we generally pay.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): How about the other ministers? What about resources and development, and labour? Could we have a statement from them? We might get the other ministers in here and find out why this money cannot be paid. I am quite serious about this. I am sure the Minister of Public Works, who is very co-operative will really agree with me in this matter.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): I cannot answer for the different departments, but if the bills were not paid on time there would be some reason for it. From the public accounts it appears that we do pay all the debts we owe. If you will look at the public accounts which were tabled some time ago I think you will get all the details and information.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Oh, no.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): Oh, yes.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Let me ask the Minister of Public Works this question. If he finds he owes money to the king's printer will his department be able to pay it right away?

Mr. Fournier (Hull): Oh yes, certainly. The moment the comptroller of the treasury authorized payment of a bill a cheque would be issued.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Would the minister communicate that to the Secretary of State and suggest that is the way to get the money?

Mr. Fournier (Hull): The Secretary of State knows how they get the money because the business of that department has grown to such an extent that the revolving fund does not seem sufficient. In his statement he