

Supply—National Defence

Mr. Warren: We do not want it.

Mr. Fulton: Our own Post Office Department does it, at page 331; there are 17,000 employees.

Mr. Drew: Yes. To come to our own estimates, at page 330, under the post office, we find there a total of 15,495; and above that you will see the details of salaries given, except where there is simply one official or again where they are indicated at prevailing rates as in the case of some of the employees of this department.

Mr. Green: And approximately 17,000 on the next page.

Mr. Drew: Then on the next page—and I mention this just to show that it is not dealing with handfuls of men—under the post office again, there is given a figure of 17,638, with the details and the salaries, and the total of approximately \$54 million.

With this practice so clearly established, it is difficult to credit the fact that the accounting method is such that this information cannot be given to this committee in some similar form; and I think it should be given. I suggest right now that instead of having the resistance that there is to giving information, it should be seen by this time how much more rapidly we would proceed if the minister would agree to follow the practice adopted in other departments and in the United Kingdom, and would take the lists that are available, have them prepared, and made available to us here. Then we can proceed to discuss this matter with knowledge of the facts before us.

The Minister of National Defence used glowing terms with regard to our attempts at standardization—and I only use this as an illustration—when he said that no nation in the world had done so much as we had done. The only way we have done that is to do nothing, in this particular case, evidently. But we are told that we can get the details of this department and that this department gives more information than any other. I must say that so far as I can see the answer is that this department is best because it does nothing to give us the information; the other departments do. This information is valuable or it is not. If the minister's contention is right and this information is not valuable, then it condemns every other department that takes the trouble to give us these details.

Mr. Noseworthy: Mr. Chairman, when I asked for that information, I had no intention of asking the minister to do what he suggests he would have to do, namely to go back to these plants where men are employed

[Mr. Drew.]

and pull their time cards to find out what they were being paid. What I was asking is that before we vote for five items amounting to \$50 million, we be given something more than just a statement "civil salaries and wages" repeated five times, and amounting to over \$50 million in this one department's estimates. I think we should have at least something approximating the information that we have in the other departments here or that we should have some idea where these people are going, what salaries they are getting, whether they are civil servants and what proportion are civil servants. The minister wants to know what good that would be to the Canadian public. I would think the Canadian public would want some knowledge of how an item of this size, namely \$1,400 million, is spent. I think some detail would be of interest to the Canadian public, even if the minister thinks it is not of interest to us here in the house.

Mr. Claxton: I shall be glad to give the hon. member the information which I understand he wants as we come to each item. But to give it now, and put it on *Hansard*, I think would be anticipating the progress we hope to make.

Mr. Noseworthy: If we could have something of that kind, either before us or on *Hansard*, instead of having to sit here and try to catch what the minister is saying as he reads these figures off, it would help us to study the matter intelligently.

Mr. Knowles: May I just say one word in connection with this matter. Reference has been made to the form in which these details are given in connection with the other departments of government. I should like to point out that the book of estimates this year is considerably larger than it was last year. One reason is that more detail has been given, in keeping with suggestions made in the public accounts committee and here in the House of Commons. For example, greater detail is given as to the break-down between temporary and permanent employees. It seems to me that last year we did not ask that the one general item for civil salaries and wages in the Department of National Defence be broken down in the same way. Bearing in mind the fact that requests in former years with respect to the form of the estimates have been met to a considerable extent, I express the hope—without prejudice to the request that we get information this year—that next year, when the estimates are brought down, the Department of National Defence will bring down its information with regard to civil salaries and wages in the same way as do the other departments.