

*Supply—Justice*

**Mr. MacInnis:** I do not rise, Mr. Chairman, to maintain that we should have a wider attitude on the discussion. I have not said anything this afternoon and I doubt whether there is anything I want to say. I realize that the main estimates are still before us and that anything we have to say can be better said at that time than now; but I should not like it to be taken that we are restricted. We may be restricted to the item, but this item pretty well covers every other item under the Combines Investigation Act, under that branch of the Department of Justice. I do not think there should be any limit. I just want to make that point. As far as I am concerned personally, I am quite willing to let this item go through and say whatever I may have to say when we are discussing the main estimates.

**Mr. Abbott:** I do not quarrel with that position. I indicated that the main line of inquiry in the consideration of these estimates should be directed to why we require this extra money, because almost any major item involves the whole policy of that particular section, and perhaps we should have half a dozen debates on that during the year. I do not know. But it does not make for very orderly debate.

**Mr. Thatcher:** If the minister will permit me I should like to raise one question. I shall take only sixty seconds. I believe this particular item has to do with the hiring of legal counsel. Much of their work has to do with the law abolishing resale price maintenance, which was passed by parliament last year. Many people were a little bit afraid at that time. I must admit that I was one of them. We feared that abolition would permit an open door as far as loss leaders were concerned. However the Minister of Justice gave parliament the assurance that if loss leaders by departmental stores or by chain stores became serious, the government would take some action. I am not going into the question today, except to say that in my opinion the time for such action has come. Today in many fields of the retail business there are bankruptcies because of loss leading by large companies. We also find that the quality of certain lines of merchandise manufactured in Canada has been deteriorated, so that manufacturers can compete as far as prices are concerned. The situation is sufficiently serious for the government to give consideration to implementing the pledge made a year or so ago, when price maintenance was abolished. If they do not, the smaller business people across the country, who after all are the backbone of many communities, will soon be in real difficulties.

**Mr. Winch:** I have a question to ask on this item. I understand that when an inquiry is made it is usually made by a royal commission, of course. A report is sent to the Department of Justice together with a transcript of all the evidence upon which the report is made. The government then has the report and the evidence, and before they do anything about it they hire outside counsel. I understand that the fees paid to these outside counsel run anywhere from \$150 to \$300 a day. At the same time the government has its own staff and all the information. Is it because of this practice of going out and getting outside counsel that this additional amount of \$65,000 is required? Could we not, in the interests of a little economy, review that policy and still maintain efficiency?

**Mr. Abbott:** This additional amount to the extent actually of \$51,500 is required because of fees and expenses of legal counsel, accountants, special assistants, reporters, special commissioners and witnesses arising out of rather numerous investigations and prosecutions which have taken place this year. It is the practice, as I understand it, to retain outside counsel to assist in these prosecutions and to advise in connection with them. Personally, I think it is desirable; but even if it were to be done by the government's own legal staff it would be necessary to increase considerably those staffs, because I know from personal experience that the lawyers in the Department of Justice are pretty well overworked as it is now. My own personal view is that nothing would be saved by enlarging the legal staff of the Department of Justice; that it is more economical and in some respects more satisfactory to retain outside counsel in each particular case.

**Mr. Winch:** If you increased the staff would you pay them the \$200 a day that you pay for outside counsel now?

**Mr. Abbott:** I know what we have to pay to keep our lawyers and we are not keeping some of them; they are going outside. Probably we are not paying them enough.

Item agreed to.

## General—

571. Expenses of committee appointed to advise on principles and procedures relating to remission service, \$1,000.

**Mr. Knowles:** I have no objection to this item, but in view of what the Minister of Finance has said a number of times during the discussion of these items it should be pointed out that not all these items in the supplementaries were in the main estimates.

**Mr. Abbott:** No, there is the occasional one.