

*Supply—Defence Production*

first large item I find is \$3 million for temporary assistance. That is a very nebulous explanation. I may be quite wrong, but I am inclined to think most of those people would be doing office work, administrative work of that sort. Some of the other items are also rather startling. Here is \$200,000 for postage. I do not see how the department will spend that much unless it is going to send out a lot of literature to all the citizens of the country. You can buy a lot of stamps for \$200,000. The minister may say that of course this is just paid by one department to another, but let us remember that the taxpayers of this country will have to pay on the basis of the total amount of these votes. Here is \$200,000 for telephones and telegrams. That is a lot of money for telegrams and conversations over the telephone. Then the last item making up the \$5 million is sundries, \$250,000. I do not know what sundries there can be to make up that amount. Of course I know that in these days a million dollars seems to be just peanuts. The other day I was sitting in the gallery with a visitor, rather an intelligent person, I thought, and she seemed disgusted with the way we discussed and handled these astronomical amounts. Her comment was, "My goodness, and we are the ones who have to pay". Of course I know that is not quite the picture, but that is the impression one gets sitting in the gallery while we are dealing with these matters. If you go out in the country and say this department has paid \$3 million for temporary assistance they will scratch their heads and ask how many stenographers they are putting on. That is their conception of it: my goodness, they must be employing a lot of temporary workers. Postage, \$200,000: my goodness, something is going down the drain. That is the impression people get.

I believe the minister should give us a more or less complete break-down. I know he spoke this morning, and I am going to analyse his rather lengthy speech tomorrow, when it comes out in *Hansard*; but I believe the people of Canada need a little more information as to why the administration item for this department should be so large. That item has nothing to do with the contracts ultimately signed, whether for guns or anything else. The people pay for them, and the contracting parties get their profit. But in order to put those contracts through it is costing the country \$5 million for administration. I think the minister owes it to the house to give us some further explanation; and when he replies I hope he will not forget the other question I asked as to whether the picture would change if Mr. Tucker got into power.

**Mr. Howe:** To take the serious part of the question first, my hon. friend overlooks the fact that there are no items in the estimates for branches in this department. If he will check all the departments he mentioned and add to the administration item the cost of those branches that have separate allocations of funds I think he will find that \$5 million as the cost of operating the Department of Defence Production is not excessive. He speaks of \$3 million for temporary assistance. I remember that he applauded loudly when I said that everyone in the department was temporary. It is a temporary department; no one has permanent status nor can anyone attain it. As I said this morning, there are roughly 1,100 people in the department. At \$3 million that would give an average of about \$2,700 per person, which I do not think he would say is exorbitant. At least I am sure the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre would say that was a very low salary, for I believe anything under \$5,000 is low to him. So I hope the hon. member will agree that to operate a department with 1,100 people for a year, \$3 million is not exorbitant. Will he go that far with me?

**Mr. Hansell:** Yes, I will go that far; but what I want from the minister—

**Mr. Howe:** That is all I wanted to know. The hon. member wanted an answer to that question and I just asked if he would agree with me.

**Mr. Hansell:** Well, I want a yes or no answer to the Tucker question.

**Mr. Howe:** We will get to that. Then my hon. friend mentioned \$200,000 for postage and thought that was a tremendous sum. Yet everyone here wants us to go into all the small industries of this country with all the tenders, and we try to do that; but it takes a lot of postage. I do not know how many tender forms we send out in the course of a day but I dare say it runs into the thousands, and each one carries a stamp. We estimate what it costs to do that business properly. I see that my hon. friend from the potato fields is very much amused. I must say I enjoy his contributions to these debates because they are so sensible, and his laugh is the most sensible contribution he makes. We will talk about potatoes some other day, and my hon. friend can join in that debate with something besides a laugh.

Then the hon. member mentioned telephones and telegrams. Well, this year I suppose we are doing a business of over a billion dollars. This is a large country; a good many questions are asked the department, and a