

*Interim Supply*

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend did not give me notice of his intention to ask this question, but after listening to him I think it is quite apparent that the hon. member has had that question replied to by implication so many times that there is no need for any further comment now.

**An hon. Member:** The silent treatment.

**Mr. Knowles:** How many times can you say "no"?

## POSTAL SERVICE

## SEVEN ISLANDS—REQUEST FOR IMPROVEMENT

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Lomer Brisson (Saguenay):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the parliamentary assistant to the Postmaster General. Following the question which I addressed to him on February 10 concerning the improvement of the mail service to the district of Seven Islands and certain localities to the east of Seven Islands, is he in a position to let me know if the department has now reached a decision?

**Mr. T. A. M. Kirk (Parliamentary Assistant to the Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my hon. friend for having given me notice of his question. In answer I may say that the department has made arrangements for the Seven Islands district to be served six times per week in the summer instead of four times, and for certain localities east of Seven Islands to be served twice weekly instead of once. The improvement of the winter service is still under consideration.

## SUPPLY

The house in committee of supply, Mr. Robinson (Simcoe East) in the chair.

## INTERIM SUPPLY

**Mr. Harris** moved:

Resolved, that a sum not exceeding \$515,411,790.67, being one-sixth of the amount of each of the items to be voted, as set forth in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1956, laid before the House of Commons at the present session of parliament; and in addition thereto, a sum not exceeding \$137,500, being one-half of the amount of item 437, a sum not exceeding \$439,942, being one-sixth of the amount of items 193, 196, 200, 201, and a sum not exceeding \$1,975,296.08, being one-twelfth of the amount of items 18, 37, 439, 440, of the said estimates be granted to Her Majesty on account of the fiscal year ending March 31, 1956.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is the annual request for interim supply which has always been granted after full consideration by the

committee. The custom has been to ask that two months' supply be granted on all the items which are to be included in the estimates, and that custom is being followed this year.

In addition, there are several other items in which more expenditure is made in that two months' period than in the latter part of the year, and as a consequence we are asking for a sum additional to the one-sixth of those items. They are set out in the resolution and they refer particularly to the Canadian international trade fair, as that expenditure will be made almost immediately. They also refer to the unemployment insurance commission, with respect to certain items which have to be paid at this time of the year; and they refer to the Senate and the House of Commons, the major portion of the cost of these items coming at this time of the year. In agriculture they refer to experimental farm services and other items; in trade and commerce, to electricity and gas inspection services, weights and measures, etc. Therefore the total amount being requested is as set out in the resolution.

There is no item which is being released to a greater extent than two-thirds, and in this case I wish to give the assurance which is given on every occasion when this bill is passed concerning the right and privilege of hon. members to criticize, or in fact to refuse supply at a future date. I give the necessary undertaking.

**Mr. Macdonnell:** I should like to ask the minister whether his undertaking is given to the actual members now sitting in this house, or merely to members of parliament from time to time; because a question arose about that point in 1949, when the minister took the position that in view of the pending election it was not necessary that the members sitting in the house at that time be the members for whom the undertaking was eventually carried out.

This question has always been a little hazy in my mind, and I rise now because I thought in view of the fact that we have a new Minister of Finance it would be an excellent time to have the point fully clarified.

**Mr. Harris:** I am not familiar with what the future might hold, of course, but it seems to me it is almost a physical impossibility to have an election in the period of time covered by this request; therefore I think it is unlikely.

**Mr. Macdonnell:** If the minister will look back to 1949 he will find how it is possible.

Resolution reported, read the second time and concurred in.