

Department of Transport Stores

Mr. Higgins: They do not buy it from the Department of Transport?

Mr. Chevrier: Some of them do.

Mr. Higgins: Not to any great extent?

Mr. Chevrier: There are other aeroplanes in the area.

Mr. Higgins: There are not very many private aeroplanes.

Mr. Chevrier: Yes, there are, but I am not going to discuss that. I am saying that is so, and that is the information I have. I do not think it is inaccurate. Then, for chemicals—no, this covers the restaurant at Gander and the provisions that must be kept on hand, \$109,308. There are other items that are all small, ranging from \$1,000 to \$50 and \$60. The items I have mentioned total about \$800,000.

Mr. Higgins: Did the minister say "chemicals"?

Mr. Chevrier: That was an error. Chemicals amount to \$8,944. I was looking at the wrong figure beside the description of the amount. It is provisions that amounts to \$109,308.

Mr. Higgins: Is it not planned to rent out the restaurant concession at Gander? Then you will not have to carry that \$109,000. I understood there is a tentative proposal to rent the restaurant concession; at least that is what I heard at Gander.

Mr. Chevrier: No.

Mr. Higgins: How much of that \$293,000 would be plant?

Mr. Chevrier: I have not a further breakdown of the amount.

Mr. Higgins: The gas and oil seems very high, but you have the information, I suppose.

Mr. Stick: Probably the plant takes in the railway machine shop and the drydock, does it?

Mr. Higgins: It is for Gander only.

Mr. Stick: What about fuel oil; does that apply to the railway?

Mr. Chevrier: No, it is for air services only.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I should like to ask a question of the minister, but first of all I think we should thank the minister for the way he associated us with himself at the opening of his remarks this morning as being in a state of mental confusion. I think we should be grateful for being associated with the minister, even if it is only in a state of mental confusion.

I want to say a word in support of the suggestion made by the member for Vancouver-Quadra, but before I do that, I understand that the department manufactures for itself certain materials that it uses—buoys and things of that kind; or have I been misinformed?

Mr. Chevrier: Yes, there are certain marine agencies which make their own equipment.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): How are the prices for them fixed? Are they just turned in at cost?

Mr. Chevrier: Yes, they are itemized at cost.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I want to say a word in support of the suggestion made by the member for Vancouver-Quadra. I do think it is clear that we are not talking about an expenditure; we are talking about what has been accurately referred to as working capital. We are talking about sensible business arrangements to facilitate the department. The only difference between us at the moment is the question of the amount. I believe the minister's amendment to clause 1 will make it clearer.

As to the amount, I want to go back for a moment to the debate in 1937, because it is perfectly clear from the words used at that time by the then minister of transport (Mr. Howe)—one must get wisdom wherever it can be found, even in unexpected quarters—that what was mainly in the minister's mind, in the mind of the then leader of the opposition, and in the mind of the then minister of finance, was that they were going to get these stores down. Speaking of the inventory, the then minister of transport said he thought it was far too large. He said, at page 2488 of *Hansard* for April 2, 1937:

It will be my aim to see that at the end of the year there are no surplus stocks.

He said he did not know whether that would be possible, but that was the aim.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I suggest very strongly to the minister that there is a danger if we make this over-all amount too large, that that aim would be largely missed. I am not going to go into a lot of figures, but I am going to put these figures to him. They sum up the situation as I see it, and, if he agrees with me, perhaps he would be induced to accept the suggestion made by the member for Vancouver-Quadra to reduce the over-all amount to \$4 million.

Let me put it to him this way. During the last year, in effect, the amount of stores plus the present revolving fund was roughly \$2,600,000, excluding Newfoundland. The significant thing to me, and it has been made