

Supply—Finance

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): No, we are not selling the canned pork in the open market.

Mr. Pickersgill: Is the government selling it in some closed market then?

Mr. Benidickson: To whom is it giving the pork away?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): In this particular case to Japan. It was found that the number of countries of the world which are interested in acquiring canned pork is a much smaller number of countries than those interested, for instance, in acquiring things like skimmed milk. It is a matter of diet and some religious observances.

Item agreed to.

652. To reimburse the agricultural commodities stabilization account for canned pork donated to international relief agencies, \$1,096,442.

Mr. Benidickson: On this item which is related very closely to the previous item perhaps the minister would give us a little more information as to the development of the disposal of canned pork. I think he will recognize that in reply to a question of mine not long ago the ministry indicated that the cost of storing canned pork in this country at the moment was at a figure of about \$40,000 per week.

The minister presides over treasury board, and I am sure that as chairman he is very concerned about an item which seems to cost something in excess of \$2 million a year. I am confident that memos have been given to him in recent times about this very important item of expenditure, and perhaps before we pass this item the minister might just indicate what the intentions of the government are in this respect.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Chairman, in connection with this item the government did provide some 5,500,000 pounds of canned pork to six world relief organizations and we still have a formidable supply of canned pork on hand. I have indicated one of the reasons just now, but I can assure the committee that my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, is doing all a man can do to meet this problem of our very large surplus.

Item agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

Contingencies and miscellaneous—

653. Telephone service at Ottawa for all departments—further amount required, \$87,000.

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether the minister would give some explanation of this item. I remember that when we were on the other side of the [Mr. Pickersgill.]

house there was always a great deal of complaint—sometimes it was vociferous and sometimes it was bitter—about the tremendous amounts of telephone bills. This is a large amount by way of an addition. It is a supplementary item of \$87,000, and while it is for telephone service at Ottawa for all departments I presume it covers a certain amount having to do with long distance calls. I wonder whether the minister would be good enough to break it down, and after having done that perhaps he might tell us what the total amount of the telephone bill is going to be for the fiscal period 1959-60.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Chairman, it is one of the misfortunes of the Department of Finance that the telephone expenses of all departments are charged to the Department of Finance. This was a consolidation which was carried out some time ago before the change of government. I accept no responsibility for this kind of consolidation. It makes the Department of Finance appear sometimes to be assuming responsibilities which do not belong to it. This item is to supplement a vote in the main estimates of \$1,326,200, and this additional sum is required to meet the increased cost of monthly accounts for switchboard equipment and local service by reason of a tariff adjustment effective December 1, 1958, to apply to the fiscal year 1959-60.

Mr. Chevrier: Where is the switchboard?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Here in Ottawa. The hon. gentleman asked for the figure for the forthcoming year. Item 118 in the main estimates for 1960-61 gives the figure as \$1,458,800. We have been faced with the results of these tariff adjustments.

Mr. Chevrier: Is the \$1,458,800—

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): No—\$1,413,200 is the total for 1959-60.

Mr. Chevrier: Is that for Ottawa alone?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): To which year is the hon. gentleman referring?

Mr. Chevrier: 1959-60. The minister gave me a figure of \$1,326,200, I thought.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): The sum of \$1,326,200 is the same vote in the main estimates for the present year, and that is to be increased by \$87,000, making a total for this present fiscal year of \$1,413,200.

Mr. Chevrier: Is that for Ottawa alone?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Benidickson: The Minister of Finance indicated that prior to his assumption of responsibility in the Department of Finance