

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

Mr. Howe: The Polymer Company does not own any real property. What would it pay interest on?

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I see.

Mr. Howe: The assets are owned by the crown; this is an agency company operating the Polymer property.

Mr. Thatcher: The Minister of Finance made a reply to the hon. member for Calgary West that I just cannot understand. He said that this would not affect the budgetary surplus in any way. Would not this be a bookkeeping entry?

Mr. Abbott: My hon. friend is a well-known businessman. He understands accounting principles at least as well as I do, I hope. This is now carried on the books of the government as an active asset at \$37 million odd. Now, then, we are going to charge that account; we are going to repay, as the Minister of Trade and Commerce has said, that debit in the active assets account of \$37 million odd, and we are going to put in an asset of \$37 million represented by debentures and stock. This is purely a bookkeeping operation. It is not a charge on operations. We are taking nothing out of this year's revenue to provide the \$37 million. If my hon. friend will read the item and if he listened to the explanation given by the Minister of Trade and Commerce, with a combination of simple accounting principles, and a little bit of law, he would understand what is being done.

Item agreed to.

Mr. Abbott: We asked that item 653 be allowed to stand because the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration was not in his place. One or two questions were asked by the hon. member for Lake Centre. I wonder whether we might revert to item 653, since the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is now in his place.

DEPARTMENT OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Loans, investments and advances—

653. To authorize and provide for a continuing special account in the consolidated revenue fund, notwithstanding section 32 of the Consolidated Revenue and Audit Act, to be known as the immigration revolving fund, from which interest-free loans may be made to immigrants, towards the cost of transportation to destination in Canada, including cost of meals en route, under conditions fixed from time to time by the governor in council; and to authorize the crediting to this special account of repayments by such immigrants and the readvancing of such moneys, and to extend and apply this authority to the amount of \$3 million provided by vote 648, Appropriation Act No. 2, 1951, \$6,000,000.

[Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood).]

Mr. Fraser: I have a question in regard to immigrants, many of whom come over, and their passages are financed by the government. After they get over here, and after a week, two weeks, a month or perhaps more than that if they develop some trouble requiring surgical treatment, or even if they have to have a surgical operation which makes them unable to continue in Canada, what does the department do for them? Does the department look after their medical expenses and then send them back again?

Mr. Harris (Grey-Bruce): As I said the other day, that is something that I prefer to discuss on the main estimates. We have agreements with the provinces with respect to aid under certain conditions. I would rather leave that until a later time on the main estimates when I will discuss the whole policy. I prefer to answer only questions with regard to assisted passage at this time.

Mr. Fraser: The only reason I brought it up is that I had a definite case—

Mr. Harris (Grey-Bruce): Send it to me.

Mr. Diefenbaker: What is the need for a vote of \$6 million at this time? The vote previously was for \$3 million. How much of that vote has been spent and to what extent has it been repaid? Why has it become necessary to ask for \$6 million at this time? The minister says that he does not want to discuss the general question of immigration at this time, but I think some questions should be answered.

A number of immigrants come to this country under this assisted passage plan, and properly so, and they agree to stay for one year on a farm. They get advances. However, many of them upon arrival decide that they are not going to stay in the employment in which they were intended to stay. I know of one or two cases where men coming over as farm workers made the decision before they actually disembarked at their destination that they were going to the cities instead of the farm.

I think the minister should clarify the matter and tell us the degree to which there is enforcement of the regulation requiring an immigrant who has received assistance to go on the farm. After all, if the regulation means anything it should be carried into effect. I think the minister should give an explanation, first, of the degree to which these loans have been used and the extent to which they have been repaid, and then tell us something as to why it is that immigrants, coming to this country under agreement with the immigration authorities that their destination will be the farm, have on so many occasions paid no attention to the circumstances under