

increase the amount of meat available for overseas; that there would be so much opposition to it, so much friction, and so on. We had a great deal of opposition and friction; we must not forget that. We had a strike of miners in Alberta lasting for more than a month following the introduction of meat rationing. We had a butchers' strike in Montreal, and we had endless delegations. We persisted, however, and it was the right thing to do; but the restoration of meat rationing was not something to be entered into lightly.

Mr. BRACKEN: I suggest that the opposition to rationing, whatever it was, should not have been allowed to influence the government to postpone that decision when it knew it was increasing the amount of meat going overseas and when it also knew that at the same time production in Canada was down almost twice as much a month as in the previous year. The government undertook to send an additional fifteen million pounds a month overseas at the very time it knew production was down thirty million pounds a month compared with the previous year. Yet it did not bring in rationing until September. The reduction in production was known to the government in January of this year. Its own statistics show that from 200,000 to 300,000 fewer hogs were killed each month from January onward during the first half of this year.

Item agreed to.

Public debt charges—Servicing of public debt—  
60. Commission for payment of interest on public debt, services of fiscal agents, London, registrar's fees, etc., \$280,300.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): I wish to ask just one question in regard to the figures shown for the provinces, a statutory item following this one. Do these figures still stand, or has anything that has happened in the interval caused them to be altered? Are these still the working figures?

Mr. ILSLEY: These figures still stand with the exception of the figure for Alberta, which was raised the other day by legislation.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: There is also a statutory item covering the interest on the public debt. Could the minister give us a comparison of this item for 1945-46 with the same item for 1939-40? I see the increase this year is \$79,253,628, and I am just wondering whether the debt increased in the same proportion as the public debt charges.

Mr. ILSLEY: I would have to send for the 1939-40 figures; I have not them here.

[Mr. Ilsley.]

Mr. CASTLEDEN: The minister could not give me any approximate idea?

Mr. ILSLEY: No; I have not those figures here.

Item agreed to.

Miscellaneous grants and contributions—federal district commission—

66. Maintenance and improvement of grounds adjoining government buildings, Ottawa, and improvements to the parkway system under the control of the federal district commission, \$133,500.

Mr. MacNICOL: I understand that the grounds around these parliament buildings now are cared for by the federal district commission. Is that correct?

Mr. ILSLEY: I cannot be sure about that. I thought the public works department had something to do with it, but from this it would seem that the federal district commission looks after the grounds.

Mr. MacNICOL: I am told that they are now cared for by the federal district commission, and I wish to make this comment. Until last year the grounds around these buildings were kept beautifully, and we had flower beds which really enhanced the appearance of the grounds. Last year, however, because they were not cared for by the same staff, the flower beds were allowed to run into the grass, particularly at the west end of this building. I do not know that the commission is doing as good a job as our own men did. Previously the work was very well done, and I have often wondered why the care of the grounds was turned over to the federal district commission. Certainly they are not as beautiful as they were.

Item agreed to.

General—

68. To provide for the expenses of the comptroller of the treasury's office, \$5,122,560.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): There is an increase of \$2,000,000 in this item. What are the reasons for that?

Mr. ILSLEY: The increase here is \$1,903,040. The vote provides for salaries and expenses of the comptroller of the treasury's office. The Consolidated Revenue and Audit Act, 1931, provides for the appointment of the comptroller of the treasury for the purpose of maintaining more complete control over the administration of the consolidated revenue fund. The act assigns the following duties to the comptroller:

(1) The issue of public moneys out of the consolidated revenue fund by cheque, or other instrument as directed by the treasury board.