

Supply—External Affairs

—I have been up and down many times. I have always received good service, but I realize that they are working under difficulties. Some change should be made, so far as their office space is concerned.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am very glad the hon. member has raised this point. I wish the passport office were the only dismal place in the service. As hon. members know, practically all departments of government are overcrowded, and lacking adequate space. However, we hope that when we ask for some additional sums to construct necessary public buildings we may have the support of hon. members opposite.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I should like to associate myself with the hon. member for Peterborough West in what he has said respecting the passport office. They have functioned well during these years, and deserve the commendation of hon. members.

Mr. COLDWELL: What progress has been made in connection with the exchange of views regarding passage across the border between our two countries?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: A committee of our officials has been meeting with officials of the United States. I cannot say, however, just what the present status of their negotiations is.

Mr. COLDWELL: But the negotiations are proceeding, are they?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Yes, they are.

Mr. FRASER: Women proceeding to Great Britain have to have exit permits, on which they must state that they are going to reside in Great Britain either permanently, or for at least one or two years. However, in the event of something happening in Canada before the expiration of that time, those persons have to apply in Great Britain to the high commissioner for transportation back to Canada. On such occasions they are treated not as Canadians, but rather as immigrants, and must take their chances on the quota. What is the present situation?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Regulations respecting admission to Great Britain are made by the British government, not by this government, but we require at present an exit permit before women are permitted to leave Canada. Persons coming to Canada fall under the general regulations. I am unable to say whether or not persons such as those described by the hon. member are covered by them. I should not think, however, that there have been any special requirements, other than those having general application.

[Mr. Fraser.]

Mr. FRASER: A Canadian woman may visit Great Britain to see relatives she may not have seen for ten years. While there, however, a close relative may die here in Canada, requiring her return. She has to apply for permission to come back to Canada, but upon her return is not treated as a Canadian. She is treated as an immigrant.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I cannot say offhand what the immigration regulations are. The minister might help on that point, but I shall try to secure the information for the hon. member.

Mr. REID: I believe the passport office is the only important office in Ottawa in which the chief has not a telephone of his own. When one telephones the chief of the passport division he must wait for some time until that official is hunted down and brought to the telephone. I should hope that the chief of a branch as important as the passport branch should at least have a telephone of his own.

Item agreed to.

External Affairs—

654. To provide for expenses of the Canadian delegation to Bermuda for discussions with delegates from the United Kingdom and Newfoundland on civil aviation, \$1,500.

Mr. JACKMAN: Why is this item not included in the supplementary estimates for the Department of Transport, or some department other than External Affairs? It seems to me it might more properly belong at some other point.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: This is an amount spent in connection with a delegation visiting another part of the world. The Department of External Affairs has had general supervision over all delegations which have been travelling. I should think this would be the most appropriate place to have the item.

Mr. JACKMAN: Will it be the policy of the government to charge to the Department of External Affairs the cost of all delegations visiting international conferences? It seems to me that this is a most exceptional circumstance, and that the estimate should be included among those of the Department of Transport. Is it to be the policy of the government that all moneys spent abroad for the attendance of members of this government, or of its appointees, at international conferences, shall be charged to the Department of External Affairs?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I believe each case will have to be considered on its merits