

Mr. EULER: I think I explained that there was an unusually large stock on hand, so it was not thought necessary to buy so many this year.

Mr. BENNETT: Is the stock on hand now about the average or less than the average?

Mr. EULER: I am told that there is usually a margin or reserve supply kept on hand, and this year apparently they did not need so many. I would judge that there may have been more bought last year than were found to be necessary; at any rate they think they have a sufficient supply, so there is no need for spending this \$80,000.

Mr. BENNETT: That is a lot of money. I was going to ask the minister whether the government has under consideration the question of returning to the penny rate of postage. That, of course, is a matter of policy, but this is a good place to discover what the policy may be. It is not often we have a chance.

Mr. EULER: It occurs to me we have had all the arguments in the world to-night from the hon. member for Winnipeg North and other hon. members who are trying to show that there is a deficit in the department. I would hardly think that under those circumstances, if that be true—and perhaps it is—that would be the time for a reduction in postal rates and an increase in deficits. As my right hon. friend says, it is a matter of policy—and I am not able to make a pronouncement upon it.

Mr. BENNETT: I think the minister will agree that it is a desperate thing that we should have such sudden changes in the acting Postmaster General; for he said a minute ago that the hon. member for Winnipeg North had been suggesting that there is a deficit and then added "perhaps he is right." If that is right, the Postmaster General was very wrong in what he was saying to us the evening he happened to be handling the estimates. I do not like to see such a conflict between the acting Postmaster General and the Postmaster General with respect to so critical a matter. One talked about a surplus of about \$3,000,000, and now the acting minister says that it may be that the hon. member for Winnipeg North is right in suggesting that there was a deficit.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): But the other one was an acting minister, too.

Mr. BENNETT: We had the real one at first.

Mr. HEAPS: I said there might be one, if there was a proper accounting of post

office accounts. I can well understand the enthusiasm of the hon. member for Skeena in connection with these estimates, because, upon looking through the accounts, I find an item of \$170,000 for a public building at Prince Rupert. I can see that there is good reason why he should express delight.

May I state one reason for taking this stand in connection with the estimates. I have always contended that the post office is in a different category from other government departments. A post office building is in a category different from buildings such as these parliament buildings, for instance. The Post Office Department is a utility, receiving revenues for services rendered.

Mr. DUPUIS: Does the hon. member mean that the House of Commons is not a utility?

Mr. HEAPS: Sometimes; but sometimes it is otherwise. I say that if we are not a utility, at least we are not a department which charges anything for services rendered, as is the case with respect to the Post Office Department. For instance, the hydro enterprise in Ontario provides a statement at the end of the year with respect to profits made or losses suffered. I do not wish to say anything further, except to add the hope that when another year comes around and the Post Office estimates are submitted to the house, they may be placed before us in such a manner that we may have some idea of the result of the year's operation of that utility.

Mr. BETTS: Last year the vote for travelling expenses was \$10,750; this year it is \$17,450. Would the minister tell us what those expenses include and why this fairly substantial increase of more than \$6,000 is made?

Mr. BENNETT: Air travel is six cents a mile.

Mr. EULER: I gave that information some time ago. However, I may state again that the additional amount of \$6,700 is required for representation at the Postal Union Congress to be held at Buenos Aires in March, 1939.

Mr. BENNETT: A trip to Buenos Aires? I hope it has better results than some trips I know of.

Mr. BROOKS: I notice an item for Magdalen islands news service, the same amount as last year. What constitutes that service?

Mr. EULER: Does the hon. member want the cost of it?

Mr. BROOKS: No; what is the service?