

*War Appropriation Bill*

Mr. ILSLEY: No, I could not. That vote was not allocated to the four paragraphs.

Mr. BLACK (Cumberland): Where can an hon. member obtain a statement of expenditures on specific undertakings, such as Federal Aircraft or the Debert military development?

Mr. POWER: With regard to the airport and military camp at Debert, if the hon. member will ask a question I shall endeavour to get the information. I would have particulars as to expenditures but not as to payments made. Usually the payment is made some time after the expenditure.

Mr. BLACK (Cumberland): This was originally an emergency landing field but it has been developed into a large military camp. Where shall we be able to get the total expenditures made on that camp?

Mr. POWER: The Department of National Defence would have that.

Mr. BLACK (Cumberland): Will it appear in some return submitted to parliament, or shall we have to ask for information with regard to each one of these undertakings?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): If the question is asked here, the information should be given, provided the minister has it available.

Mr. POWER: We shall be only too glad to give any information asked for. Eventually this would appear in the public accounts, but it might be hard to find the information in connection with a military camp like the one at Debert. I do not know whether there are, but it is quite possible that there have been roads constructed in connection with this camp and there might be a dozen different items throughout the public accounts. It would take one who was accustomed to perusing the public accounts to find everything relating to the Debert military camp. If my hon. friend wants the expenditures to date, there would be no trick in getting them.

Mr. BLACK (Cumberland): I should like the total expenditures and the total commitments made with regard to the Debert military camp and airport. Would the Minister of Finance advise the committee the practice with regard to payments? I have had a number of complaints, and I know the minister has had many more, in connection with delay in the payment of accounts. Sometimes these commitments involve the total capital or the total credit of a company.

Mr. ILSLEY: The comptroller of the treasury must verify the facts, and when the facts are verified the account is paid. What

[Mr. Nicholson.]

the specific steps are that are taken for the purpose of verifying the account, I cannot say at the moment, but I can get that information if it is of interest to the hon. gentleman. It is a matter of detail.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): The principles are laid down in the statute, are they not?

Mr. ILSLEY: Yes, I think so.

Mr. HOMUTH: Months and months have gone by after the delivery of goods, but firms have received no payment yet, and they have been very much embarrassed. The banks will no longer advance them money, and that is a very serious matter for some of them. I cannot understand why, two or three or four months after the goods have been delivered, no payment has yet been made.

Mr. ILSLEY: There is often a reason which is not the fault of the comptroller's staff. Sometimes delays may take place because the comptroller's staff is understaffed or something of that kind. There has been a continuous increase in the number of appointments of accountants, auditors, clerks and others working for the comptroller of the treasury, trying to keep up with the great increase in the work of the office. I know that in many instances it has not been the fault of the comptroller or the fault of his staff that delays have taken place.

Mr. MacNICOL: I should like to ask the Minister of Munitions and Supply one more question. If company "A" desires to buy a steel shearing machine, must it obtain permission to buy that machine from the Citadel company which has been set up by the government and to which the minister has referred?

Mr. HOWE: If company "A" is buying a shearing machine with its own money, it does not need to refer to Citadel at all, except of course at the present time, to buy a tool from the United States, there must be a clearance from the United States government. As my hon. friend knows, the export of machines is by special permit, and usually in such a case Citadel is asked to get the release, but Citadel does not handle the account in any way if it is a transaction between two private firms.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): In other words, Citadel is given priority.

Mr. HOWE: Yes. Usually as a matter of convenience, priority is obtained through Citadel, which keeps its own officer in Washington for that purpose. In that way it may