

Supply—Finance

Mr. Green: Has the minister made any representations to the United States asking if they would have any objection?

Mr. Harris: I think the hon. member knows one does not disclose any representations that are made until some solution may be reached and announced.

Mr. Green: I must say, Mr. Chairman, that it does not sound very hopeful.

Mr. Monteith: It occurs to me that the overall expenditures under this item are up considerably. The number of employees is up from 11 to 17, and there is a new item for publication of reports in the amount of \$4,000. There was nothing for that last item last year. Would the minister mind explaining briefly why there is this increase in cost and in the number of employees?

Mr. Harris: As to the publication of reports, Mr. Chairman, we have two rather large reports that we expect to have to publish shortly, the one on the primary iron and steel products investigation and the one on pipes and tubes. With respect to the increase in numbers, I think I pointed out when I moved the amendments to the Tariff Board Act earlier this session—

Mr. Monteith: I cannot hear the minister. It is not his fault. There is a lot of talking going on in front of me.

Mr. Harris: Earlier this session when we amended the Tariff Board Act I explained that there had been a heavier load of work placed upon the tariff board in recent months than had been the case for a good many years, that the number of appeals under the customs tariff and similar legislation is increasing, and that I have been sending a larger number of inquiries under the Tariff Board Act to the board.

Item agreed to.

Payments to municipalities—

124. Grants to municipalities in lieu of taxes on federal property—To provide for payments to municipalities in accordance with the Municipal Grants Act, and the rural municipal grants regulations established by order in council of October 28, 1954, P.C. 1954-1621, and to provide for payments to municipalities under order in council of October 6, 1954, P.C. 1954-1497, in respect of the cost of medical and hospital services and supplies furnished to federal employees and other persons specified therein, \$7,065,500.

Mr. Monteith: Could the minister give us the amount actually spent last year or the amount spent so far this year?

Mr. Harris: Last year payments amounted to \$6,456,250.

Mr. Monteith: That was the estimate.

Mr. Harris: The total was \$6,986,750.

[M. Harris.]

Mr. Hamilton (York West): Since most of the assistance the municipalities can receive will come through the provinces, will the minister report whether he has had any continuing or additional talks with the provinces in connection with reaching a final agreement under the dominion-provincial legislation?

Mr. Harris: The legislation was passed by the house a short time ago, and I was looking forward to a period of comparative freedom during which we might proceed with the negotiations.

Mr. Hamilton (York West): Are these continuing negotiations? They are going on?

Mr. Harris: There was a continuing committee of officials appointed at the conference a year ago and I am sure it will be meeting in the near future.

Item agreed to.

Contingencies and miscellaneous—

125. To provide, subject to the approval of the treasury board, for miscellaneous minor and unforeseen expenses including authority to re-use any sums repaid to this appropriation from other appropriations, and special compensation or other rewards for inventions or practical suggestions for improvements, \$1,500,000.

Mr. Monteith: This is labelled category No. 22, which is more or less of a miscellaneous item, and I notice that throughout all the estimates there is a great amount of money under No. 22. Can the minister tell us how much was spent last year, at which time there was an estimate of \$1 million? The amount is up 50 per cent this year. What is the reason for the increase?

Mr. Harris: The amount spent in the last fiscal year was \$908,105. The reason we have increased it is that we were obliged to refuse what we thought were desirable projects during the year because we did not have enough money to cover them, and we feel that another \$500,000 will be necessary this year.

Mr. Monteith: What type of projects are they that would come under contingencies and miscellaneous and not be considered worthy of being stipulated?

Mr. Harris: I have seven or eight pages of details here.

Mr. Monteith: Give us a few of the larger ones.

Mr. Harris: There was \$150,000 for flood relief for India, Pakistan and Granada in connection with a hurricane they had there. There was another \$150,000 in connection with some additional work at Port aux Basques, about which we have heard a good deal lately. I see here a quarter of a million dollars in connection with the public building at Winnipeg,