

Civil Service Commission, and until that is obtained and the matter finally put through the amount of retiring allowance cannot be known because the exact length of service cannot be determined.

Mr. FIELDING: From a statement made by the hon. gentleman as to the reduction of staff, I presume there will be some economy. But apart altogether from the cost of the retiring allowances I do not think we shall be in a very good position to estimate the extent of the economy until we have had a year's experience. The suggestion of my hon. friend from Kent with regard to travelling allowances will have to be considered. In Nova Scotia there were five districts; consequently, no one of these engineers would have to travel a long distance in connection with his work. If there is to be one district only I suppose we cannot complain if Halifax is chosen as the headquarters, but if every time a public work in Cape Breton has to be attended to the engineers must travel from Halifax to that district, two or three hundred miles distant and back, there will be a very considerable bill of expense. I do not know whether that has been taken into account, but as I say, I assume that there will be some measure of economy in the reduction of staff which is projected.

Mr. McCURDY: I omitted to answer the second question by the hon. member for Guysborough. Mr. A. Bernasconi was in receipt of a salary of \$2,460 previous to retirement. His retiring allowance would be based on the average salary received by him during the three years prior to his retirement. I have pleasure in informing the hon. member that Mr. Bernasconi can claim to receive the retiring allowance—

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): Will his bonus be taken into consideration?

Mr. McCURDY: Not in computing the amount of retiring allowance. I may say in reply to the hon. member for Shelburne and Queen's that the matter of travelling allowance has received full consideration. There have been a number of anomalies in the service. When I first became a member of Parliament the engineer for the county I represented, Shelburne and Queen's, was resident in Shelburne and his district comprised the counties of Shelburne, Queen's and Cumberland. In order to reach Cumberland, one part of his district, he had to pass through three or four intervening counties. In the reorganization an effort has been made to remove these

[Mr. McCurdy.]

anomalies. Why such an arrangement was ever made passes my comprehension. The travelling expenses which will be incurred by operating from a central office will not be as much greater than they were under the old system as may appear at first sight. No matter from which office an officer proceeds, to reach the termination of his journey, a large part of that journey must be over the same ground and at the same expense, no matter whether he proceeds from one of the new central offices or from one of the old local engineering offices. The matter of travelling expenses and loss of time has all been taken into account, and I can assure the committee that there is a very substantial saving under the reorganization. No hard and fast lines have been drawn in attempting this. I fully appreciate that the actual efficiency of the service, the operating cost and that sort of thing, under the new conditions are more or less conjectural. If it be found, after a year's trial, that the results anticipated are not being obtained, the way is open for further correction. My view is—and I am sure it is the view of the officials of the department—that wherever an improvement can be made in operation, such improvement should be made. If it be found by experience that other dispositions can bring about more economical and efficient results, they will, of course, be adopted.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): Can the minister say whether the whole Antigonish staff has been retained excepting Mr. Bernasconi?

Mr. McCURDY: After reorganization, I notice the following names on the chief engineer's slate of proposed officers: A. MacGillivray, D. H. McDonald, P. D. Mosher, J. H. Munro, W. S. Archibald, H. P. Bernasconi, Miss C. Macdonald, Miss A. Connell. Those officers are supposed to be on the staff of the reorganized office, and if the names of the persons that my hon. friend is solicitous about on the Antigonish staff are on that list, he can be sure that the plan is to retain them on the reorganized staff.

Mr. LEGER: Has the travelling inspector for the district of Chatham been dismissed or is he still in office?

Mr. McCURDY: We have no official known by the name of "travelling inspector," but the department has for years employed what are known as "construction foremen." Possibly that is the official to whom my hon. friend refers.