

Supply—Labour

Mr. Pickersgill: I suggest that hon. members opposite should wait for just a second, because if the hon. member for Essex East was right when he said that the Minister of Finance did not have the information which would enable him to reply to my question, which asked what the government did about this matter, it means, since the Minister of Finance is a member of the government, that the government did nothing about it, and that the Prime Minister broke his word. I should like an assurance from the Minister of Finance that this question was brought before the cabinet and considered by the government as the Prime Minister promised on January 16. If the minister remains silent everyone is entitled to draw the conclusion that the Prime Minister's statement was not correct; that this consideration was not given at all, as promised on January 16, and that the Prime Minister's statement was not correct. I think the Minister of Finance should seek to clear the Prime Minister's name in connection with this matter.

Mr. Robichaud: The Minister of Finance does not seem to be aware that special agents have been employed under the unemployment insurance commission, and it is our understanding that part of this fund being voted today will cover the salaries of these agents—

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): May I clear up that point; I have the information now. No part of this supplementary item is for the purpose indicated, namely the payment of salaries to these agents. Their remuneration is taken care of under provision made in the main item. The hon. member will find that at page 264 in the main estimates for 1958-59, in the item for professional and special services. There is no addition for this purpose in the supplementary item now before the committee.

Mr. McMillan: This seems quite a large amount and all of it, except about \$500,000, is for extra wages. Does this additional sum represent extra salaries and wages paid to people already employed, or have we taken on a number of additional employees? Could the minister give us a breakdown of this figure?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): This requirement arises out of an increased work load. The item, as the hon. member will see by reference to page 19 of the details, is for \$1,762,000 in respect of salaries and wages. The increased work load has accounted for much of this. Some of it has been accounted for by salary revisions, but the bulk is accounted for by the increased work load.

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A great deal of the increased staff requirement has been provided on a casual basis.

Mr. Hellyer: I wonder if the minister could tell us how much of this extra cost is due to the cancellation of the Avro Arrow program?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): None, sir.

Mr. Hellyer: I wonder if the minister could tell us how many additional persons have been taken on in the metropolitan Toronto area in the last 60 days?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I cannot give that information now, but if the hon. member is interested I shall be glad to obtain it and convey it to him. Out of the existing staff the commission arranged for representatives to go into the Avro plant immediately after the general dismissals ordered by the company in order to provide on the site service.

Mr. Hellyer: Is the minister sure that they were all from existing staffs? The existing staffs were not able to keep up with all the work they had on hand before this shutdown, and surely the commission would have engaged additional staff in order to avoid falling further into arrears.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I know that those who were sent in were experienced personnel, but I shall be glad to obtain the information which the hon. member requires.

Mr. Robichaud: This amount of \$425,000 for office stationery and supplies and equipment is a large sum. Can the minister give us some details?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Yes, Mr. Chairman. Part of this arises from the purchase of office equipment of a mechanical nature. I may say that the cost of mechanization is \$135,000, which means that part of this increase—the balance of \$262,000—is due to the building up of depleted stocks and because of the claims load which has of necessity meant the requisition of supplies.

At one o'clock the committee took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The committee resumed at 2.30 p.m.

The Deputy Chairman: Shall item No. 752 carry?

Some hon. Members: Carried.

Item agreed to.