

Supply—Health and Welfare

increase of almost 25 per cent in the number of applications granted. All the provinces without exception felt that the first year's experience was important, and we are now assessing the results since the wider interpretation with which all medical counsellors agree.

We are having a meeting of the board in the fall, when we will take a further look at it. I do not know whether my hon. friend has been talking to my deputy minister, but he likely has, and he will realize that their ideas on this matter are very close, and mine also are very strong. This is particularly true in the case of mentally deficient people. Of these cases now being covered I would say that of the 25 per cent perhaps 12 per cent are mentally deficient cases, which I thought would be included from the beginning but which now represent the bulk of those who are enjoying the benefits of the liberalizing policy or the new interpretation which is being given.

I am sure that all hon. members will be interested in learning that since I spoke in this house we have put another 2800 persons on the disability allowance roll, which represents about 800 more than I anticipated would be the case when the act was first discussed. I think the discussion tonight on this particular subject has been most useful, and I am sure it will help those in the provinces and here who have to administer what the hon. member from Lanark has referred to as a very good act and one which we are all anxious to see work out with great satisfaction.

The hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra raised a number of questions. If I did not rise earlier it was not out of disrespect but because I was hoping to deal with all these things collectively. The hon. member raised the question of three months' absence in the case of family allowances and three months' absence in the case of old age security. With regard to three months' absence in the case of family allowances, and having in mind the particular example he mentioned of the Kitsilano boys' band, I must say I was struck with what he said. When we come to look at the regulations I shall certainly keep that in mind. It does seem to me that a child who goes on a journey like that is temporarily absent, and in spirit should not be regarded as being absent. I do not want to make any final commitment, but I shall look at the matter closely.

With regard to the three months' absence in the case of old age security I must say that I do not share my hon. friend's views. However, I am prepared to look at that again, as I have indicated elsewhere I would do.

The reason I am prepared to do that is because of the situation the hon. member mentioned of the peninsula adjacent to Vancouver on which people reside. That may create a special situation. All I would want to say now is that these cases should be looked into, and I assure my hon. friend that I will do that.

The three months' rule is an important rule, as I am sure my hon. friend would realize if he were administering the act. The possibility of abuse is very great, but one ought to take into account the fact that in part this is a contributory scheme. I shall be glad, as I am always, to look into these things, particularly at the present time.

My hon. friend referred to the fact that old age pensioners could not qualify under the National Housing Act. Of course that is something that would come under that act, but I am a little surprised that that is the situation. I know of several projects which have been built under the National Housing Act which are occupied by older people.

Mr. Green: They were built by limited dividend corporations.

Mr. Martin: That may be. I shall note carefully what my hon. friend has said and check with my colleague the Minister of Public Works.

The hon. member for Cape Breton South gave me some pretty good advice, which he always does. I want to assure him that notwithstanding the fact I have gone into the situation and notwithstanding my absences elsewhere—with him, by the way—I am going to take a big brush and I assure him that one of the first things I will do tomorrow is to get the hon. member and see whether or not there is some way to deal with this situation.

Mr. Knowles: No wonder there was trouble, with both of you out of the country at the same time.

Mr. Martin: The hon. member for Kootenay West asked me a question which involves collaboration with the Minister of National Revenue. I assure him that I shall see that this is done forthwith.

The hon. member for Hamilton West asked me a question that involves consultation with the Minister of National Revenue, and that I shall certainly take up with him, in respect of family allowance recipients who, not having the benefit of the family allowance for the first year, find themselves affected under certain sections of the Income Tax Act. I want to thank the hon. member for Hamilton West particularly for the reference she made to the two distinguished