

Supply—Finance

Mr. Higgins: Why should these grants come under this particular department?

Mr. Sinclair: It may be because it is thought it will be harder to get a grant out of this department than out of any other.

Mr. Knowles: This may not be the proper item, but it seems to be the only place I can ask it. There was a total of \$115,000 voted last year which does not appear this year and perhaps the parliamentary assistant could explain why.

Mr. Sinclair: Last year a grant of \$65,000 was made to the empire press conference which was held recently in Ottawa and of course that will not be repeated this year. Last year a grant of \$50,000 was made toward the Halifax bicentenary celebration, which of course is not being repeated.

Item agreed to.

Insurance—

687. Departmental administration—further amount required, \$19,652.

Mr. Fleming: What is the reason for this additional vote?

Mr. Sinclair: It is due to the increased volume of business being done by the insurance companies. I might point out something which does not appear in the item, that most of this is recovered in fees from the insurance companies. Last year a total of \$233,000 was recovered so that this expanded cost will be reflected in expanded revenues for inspection fees.

Mr. Adamson: Upon what basis is the assessment made on the insurance companies?

Mr. Sinclair: It is based on the cost of the actual functions performed.

Item agreed to.

Insurance—

132. Expenses of work in the interests of fire prevention, \$18,165.

Mr. Adamson: May I repeat a suggestion which I made on a public works item in connection with fire prevention. This year we had in Canada two shocking fires where two communities were largely destroyed. There are other communities in Canada which are liable to be destroyed by similar holocausts. May I suggest that the government draw up a fire prevention code or fire prevention standards which would be applicable across the dominion. We have had two disasters this year and in the future we may have more and something should be done to prevent them.

Mr. Knowles: Are there only two employees in this office?

[Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood).]

Mr. Sinclair: The work done here is not similar to that done by the fire marshals of the province. The reason why the dominion fire commissioner is under the Department of Finance is that he must work closely with the fire insurance companies. His main job is to co-ordinate fire prevention work carried out by the different provincial departments. I may say that the insurance companies are very pleased with the work being done by the dominion fire commissioner. It is true that at the present time the permanent staff consists of only two people.

Mr. Knowles: Is the person now in the office of the dominion fire commissioner a permanent appointee?

Mr. Sinclair: Yes, Mr. C. A. Thomson is a permanent appointee.

Mr. Knowles: Since when?

Mr. Sinclair: I have not the exact date but for the last two or three months.

Mr. Cruickshank: I should like to congratulate the parliamentary assistant. We are proud that he comes from British Columbia. We have seen him handle the details of the budget and of these estimates and with all due deference to the other parliamentary assistants I do not think any other could handle these details as well.

An hon. Member: What do you want?

Mr. Cruickshank: I want to correct the parliamentary assistant on one thing. I was all ready to start for home this morning but he told me that a certain item had not been carried and now I am told that it has been carried.

Item agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Housing projects—

821. To authorize the Minister of National Defence, on transfer to the Department of National Defence of works or buildings or both, constructed or converted by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation for the said department, to assume the obligation of the corporation to repay advances made to it in respect of the works and buildings so transferred, together with interest, in accordance with the terms of the relevant debentures delivered by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation as evidence of the obligation, the corporation to be fully discharged from the said obligation to the extent that it is so assumed, \$1.

Mr. Fleming: There should be some explanation of this item because it is another of those suspicious-looking one-dollar items that we should be on our guard against.

Mr. Prudham: Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation built houses as agents for the Department of National Defence. In order to make the necessary advances of