

Supply—Trade and Commerce

Mr. Howe: I did not understand the question.

Mr. Charlton: The amount for last year of \$137,176 would have taken care of the 1951 census.

Mr. Howe: No, the work is not completed. It takes a year or two after the census is taken before all the publications are completed and all tabulations made.

Mr. Charlton: Then we can expect that figure will probably go down in 1953.

Mr. Howe: Very likely.

Item agreed to.

455. Census of population and agriculture and the 1951 census of distribution, \$1,731,366.

Mr. Catherwood: What was the total cost of the taking of the census in 1951?

Mr. Howe: The total cost is \$8,874,503.

Mr. Thatcher: At this point I should like to suggest another saving which seems feasible to me, and I think this is the only place that I can bring it up. An extra census is taken on the prairies halfway between the ten year censuses. I think it was originated in 1905 when Saskatchewan entered confederation. The reason it was taken then was that the population was increasing fairly rapidly and the people wanted additional representation. I suggest the time has come when that census could be eliminated. I think the last time it was taken was in 1946, and it cost about \$600,000 of the taxpayers' money. With a population that is relatively stable now, I respectfully suggest that is an economy which could very well be made.

Mr. Howe: I am told it is required by statute and that certain grants are based on the five-year census. We could not just wipe it out but we could explore the possibilities.

Mr. Thatcher: Perhaps the minister can tell me if there is any reason for retaining it. The population is now fairly stable. Is there any reason for that extra census in the three prairie provinces and not in the other seven provinces? It does not make sense to me, and I do not know anyone on the prairies who wants it.

Mr. Howe: I think the provincial treasurers probably want the statutory grants which are based on the five-year census.

Mr. Thatcher: How do the other seven provinces get along without it?

Mr. Howe: I am not familiar with the statute and should not be discussing the matter. I am told it is a statutory requirement. I will be glad to look into the

[Mr. Charlton.]

matter and if there is any good reason why it should be abolished I will see what can be done to that end.

Item agreed to.

Wheat and grain division—

456. Salaries and other expenses, \$28,918.

Mr. Wright: In 1950 the minister introduced an amendment to the wheat board act providing for the appointment of two additional members to that board. I assume the minister thought that was necessary at that time or he would not have had the act amended. Two years have now passed and no appointments have been made. In my opinion the wheat board is doing a very good job but I think its members are overworked. One member of the board has to spend a great deal of his time attending international conferences and selling our wheat abroad. Incidentally, I think the board has been doing a good job in finding markets for our wheat, but I suggest to the minister that he might give serious consideration to seeing that these appointments are made because I feel that now that the wheat board is handling coarse grains, contacting our customers abroad and making sales, the time has come when the membership of the board should be increased. It would not cost the government anything. The salaries of the members of the wheat board are paid out of wheat board funds. I am sure the farmers of western Canada would be prepared to see the number of members increased so they could do their job even better than they are able to at the present time, particularly with respect to securing new outlets for our grain.

Mr. Howe: The only reason we have not appointed additional members of the board is that we have not been able to find men who have the experience and the background of the three men we have on the wheat board.

Mr. Wright: Then you will never find them.

Mr. Howe: My hon. friend knows if you deteriorate the average you bring down the value of the team. There are men who have had the experience necessary but unfortunately they are not available for service on the board. However, I am still looking, and if I can find a man who I believe will improve the work of the board I will be very pleased to appoint him. If I cannot find a man who will improve the work of the board or who the board think will improve their work he will never be appointed as long as I sit in this chair.

Mr. Wright: Why did the minister introduce the amendment to the act unless he had somebody in view or some plan in view to actually implement the amendment? It seems to me