

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): May I ask if the minister has not got at the present time sufficient microscopes in the department. If I understood him correctly, he has an item of from \$500 to \$700 for microscopes. That seems an extraordinary sum of money for that purpose.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: I have never bought any of this equipment myself, but I understand that amount will buy two or three instruments. This equipment is not for Ottawa alone, but for a number of laboratories all over the Dominion, some twenty in all.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): If the minister is reducing the work of the department surely they will require, if anything, less microscopes than formerly: Is there a need for new microscopes particularly, or is this sum required for repairs?

Mr. MOTHERWELL: I am afraid the hon. member did not listen very carefully. We are not intending to reduce the outside activities with respect to the curtailment of insect ravages. We are endeavouring to maintain and operate the office in Ottawa a little more cheaply, to the extent of \$3,000.

Mr. TOLMIE: Would the minister tell us what action he has taken in respect of the importation of plants from the Old Country by mail? I understand there are some negotiations on whereby it will be possible to handle these through the post office.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: Just a few days ago we got through Council new regulations permitting plants to be sent through the post office. Formerly that was not permitted.

Mr. TOLMIE: Under what conditions will the inspection be made in the Old Country, and what will the fee be for the inspection?

Mr. MOTHERWELL: All inspections are made on this side, usually at the port of entry. The parcel will designate what it contains, of course. I think in the past all inspections have been made on this side. Not all post offices, but any large post office will be a medium through which the shipments can be made by mail.

Mr. FORKE: I understand there was an item of \$822 for cases last year. To an ordinary man it seems almost out of the question that so much money should be spent annually on cases for preserving the new specimens collected during the year.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: If I had not seen this collection myself and the innumerable drawers and cases, I would have thought just as my hon. friend does. It would take hours to go through them all. It is a national collection.

Mr. FORKE: Is this simply for new specimens collected during the year?

Mr. MOTHERWELL: I understood from Mr. Gibson when I was there, that they are making a national collection for reference purposes. They are collecting not only new specimens, but are preserving all the insects that have been doing damage in Canada dating back for perhaps a quarter of a century. The collection is constantly being added to. Very frequently the specimens that were mounted formerly were not just as well preserved as they might be. It is a very delicate operation to catch these insects alive. They have to be carefully killed, and then they are mounted and preserved so that they appear in a natural condition. It takes quite a lot of money.

Mr. FORKE: I do not want the minister to misunderstand me. I realize that insects and different forms of fungus are perhaps the most dangerous menace we have, but the expenditure seems very large.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: It is expensive. The cases are of steel. I was reading up this question by an entomologist. I forget his name for the moment, and he made the prediction that the next great war would be against insect life and fungus growth. I do not know whether he will prove to be right or not, but I do know that as a community gets older, and particularly if you restrict yourself to the growing of one particular crop, providing food for one particular variety of insect, the insects will increase in number every year. We are fortunately exempt from many of the insects that infest the southern states, attacking almost every species of plant life in the farm and garden. We in this northern latitude are saved from a great many of those pests. Nevertheless, if we have a series of warm years, with an early spring, it is marvellous how new insects will pour into our country. The European corn borer, for instance, was quite unknown in Canada about five years ago, but I suppose there must be thirty counties in Ontario affected by the corn borer to-day.

Mr. RYCKMAN: What amount of the vote was expended last year?

Mr. MOTHERWELL: About ninety-five per cent.