

Supply—Trade and Commerce

Mr. Howe: I would be glad to have my hon. friend ask any questions he wishes.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): The minister just mentioned two or three headings, including a welfare division. Do I understand he is passing over that without comment? I should like to hear something about it.

Mr. Howe: It is the staff training and welfare division. Examinations are held for various services, for instance the trade commissioner service. Certain applicants are accepted; then they are given a course of training which takes them to various parts of Canada under the guidance of experienced trade commissioners. They are given a thorough training in the work they will undertake when they go to foreign fields.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): What is the significance of the word "welfare"?

Mr. Howe: The division also looks after the welfare, for example, of our trade commissioners in all parts of the world. When you have commissioners in the Belgian Congo, or South Africa, or in the Far East, the welfare of the staff becomes rather a problem. A branch of the training and welfare division keeps records of postings and how commissioners are getting on.

Then there is the trade commissioner service itself. We have trade commissioner offices in forty-six countries throughout the world, and that number is increased as world conditions permit. They are the eyes and ears of Canadian business. They report back trade possibilities in their territories for Canadian commodities, report on trade conditions, and so on. In that connection there is a weekly publication called *Foreign Trade* which has a wide circulation in Canadian industry and which summarizes the reports of trade commissioners from all localities. It mentions openings for Canadian exports that have been drawn to the attention of the department by the trade commissioners, and in general provides up-to-date information to those interested in the export of Canadian products.

Then we have the commodities branch which deals with metals, timber and raw materials generally, except grains, which are handled in a separate branch. This branch is divided into an export division and an import division. The work of the export division, of course, is obvious. It works with the trade commissioners in finding openings, and with Canadian industry in calling the attention of exporters to those openings abroad for Canadian products. The import division works with our trade commissioners to find markets in Canada for commodities offered abroad

that are required by the Canadian economy. This branch was opened at the end of the war and has proved extraordinarily useful in helping to balance our trade, particularly with the sterling area and European countries. It has been useful to Canadian manufacturers and Canadian industry generally by finding sources of materials in short supply in this country.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): To what extent are these services availed of? Could the minister give us the percentage of importers, whether importers for sale or industrialists who need materials, who act through the Department of Trade and Commerce, and what percentage act individually?

Mr. Howe: It is impossible to say with any degree of accuracy, but I do know that Canadian industry is very much in the habit of dealing with both divisions. It is seldom that an officer of a representative industry comes to Ottawa without calling on both divisions. Both are very active, and are considered very useful.

Then the commodities section deals with such things as surplus foods such as potatoes, canned salmon, and so on; anything in the way of food that requires to be marketed abroad. It also deals with chemicals, machinery, metals, mineral products, wood and wood products, textiles and leather, and general products.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Would that apply to exporters to the United States? I am thinking now of wood products, for example.

Mr. Howe: Oh, certainly; it refers to exports to all countries.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): The newsprint industry, for instance, would be acting under its own steam, would it not?

Mr. Howe: Very likely; nevertheless the newsprint industry keeps in very close touch with the department. Seldom a day goes by that some problem is not placed before the department by the newsprint industry. We were particularly active following the curtailment of shipments to the British dominions and the United Kingdom, and we were very active in connection with exports to South America, straightening out the problems of the industry. This branch is the channel of communication between industry and government as far as exports of raw materials are concerned.

Then there is the transportation and communications division, a service to traders keeping them advised of changes in shipping rates, changes in restrictions having to do