

to pilots who were superannuated, who had ceased to be engaged in active work and had nothing to support them. A very considerable amount, as I understand, was accumulated, and in addition to that the pilots themselves started what was intended to be a mutual insurance company. Twenty-nine or thirty of these pilots are said to have paid in \$50 each for several years. This was deposited with the treasurer of the Pilotage Commission. It is said that beneficiaries who are entitled to receive moneys out of this fund have not been able to receive it. I would like to ask the minister whether or not he has any information on the subject? Of course, it is not a fund directly under the control of the government. It is, however, as I understand, directly under the control of the pilot commissioners, and they are under the control of the government. It is quite possible, therefore, for the minister to obtain information on the subject and I bring the matter to his attention, because the complaint on behalf of the pilots has been made to me as a member of parliament, and I think it is a matter on which the House should be advised.

Mr. PREFONTAINE. My attention was directed to this matter a few days ago, and I have given instructions to prepare a report upon it. I have sent an officer to Halifax to hold an investigation into the wreck, and he is instructed specially to look into this matter and to report on the facts. I expect to receive the report on Tuesday or Wednesday next, when I will at once communicate the information to the hon. gentleman and the House.

Commercial agencies—additional amount required, \$3,000.

Mr. URIAH WILSON. I would like to have the names of these agencies, where they are located, what the salaries of the agents are, what expenses are allowed, and what the special advantages of these agencies are.

Mr. FIELDING. I do not know that this vote is for any special officer. It is for the service generally. I think the information asked for by my hon. friend was given by the Prime Minister a few days ago. If it was not given fully, I will procure it.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. What do these commercial agents really do, and what advantage does the country receive from their services? What is accomplished? They perform, I suppose, such functions as are discharged by consuls, gathering information and transmitting it to the home government.

Mr. FIELDING. I am afraid that I have not that personal familiarity with this service that would enable me to answer as fully as the Minister of Trade and Commerce might desire. I imagine that a service of this kind is something like an ad-

vertisement in a newspaper: You are never quite sure how much of the trade you get is due to the advertisement, yet advertising is a good thing. These agents are sent to points where there is some prospect of developing Canadian trade. Necessarily at first their work is slow, and they meet with difficulties. They send their reports from time to time to the department, which are published and distributed. If my hon. friend asks me to give evidence that they do increase our trade, perhaps that is not easy to do. They are practically advertising agents for Canada, and in some cases I have no doubt their efforts considerably increase our trade, though at first they may not show much result. For example, we had an agent in Australia for many years, and while in the beginning his work was not very successful, it has ultimately resulted in opening up considerable trade. That is the theory, and I think experience will show that the work is worth continuing.

Mr. URIAH WILSON. Is Mr. Larke the agent in Australia?

Mr. FIELDING. There are two in Australia—Mr. Larke at Melbourne and Mr. Ross at Sydney, or vice versa.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I took occasion a short time ago to make myself acquainted with the information which must be transmitted by the consuls of the German empire to the home authorities from the various places in the world where they are stationed, and it is really surprising how thoroughly and systematically the information is collected and tabulated. These commercial agencies throughout the world ought to be of some use to us. It is possible that they are of more use than I realize. If the system is a good one, it will possibly have to be extended. To that extent Canada will probably have her own consular service throughout the world in respect to interests purely Canadian—our trade interests, for example. If we propose to do anything of that kind, it is proper that the agents should act on well-defined lines and in a systematic and thorough way, and should gather information of a practical and useful character in all parts of the world. It may be that all this is realized. I do not know whether it is or not. If it is not, it seems to me that there is a very good opportunity for work in the Department of Trade and Commerce in carrying out some such system as I have referred to. The details of what is accomplished by the consuls of Germany and the United States are easily obtainable, and I am almost certain that nothing like that work or equal to it is attempted by these officers, who are practically consular agents for Canada in foreign countries.

Mr. FIELDING. I have no doubt that these officers have much to learn, and that