

Supply—Finance

never knew that before. If we can now get information as to what salaries they are receiving, from that we can possibly find out whether more of them should be made permanent or not. I always wonder how it is that so many of them are carried on year by year—some of them for ten, fifteen and twenty-five years—as temporaries and have never been made permanent. That, however, may be a special arrangement of the Department of Finance.

As I said a moment ago, there are 5,733 employees, and of those 4,318 are listed as temporaries. While it may not be a great factor in the department to give these details, I think it should be of great interest to this committee to have the details concerning an item which accounts for one-third of the total vote.

Mr. Abbott: As to the information that my hon. friend is interested in, I am sure it is available. I shall be glad to give consideration to his suggestion. There is of course a mass of information available with respect to each individual vote. If all of it were to be printed, the book of estimates would run to a fairly extensive size. One has to select which information is of particular interest to hon. members and try to make that available. If any particular information is not printed and if it is asked for, it will be obtained as soon as possible. I think the change this year was as a result of the suggestion made by my hon. friend last year; I refer to classifying the number of permanents and temporaries.

Mr. McLure: The department could say that there are ten clerks at an average of \$3,000, for instance.

Mr. Abbott: That is quite right.

Mr. McLure: They could also say that there are five economists—

Mr. Abbott: That is quite right.

Mr. McLure: —and ten superintendents. That is all we want. We do not want the details of names and so on.

Mr. Abbott: That is quite possible.

Item agreed to.

Administration of various acts and costs of special functions—

87. Superannuation and retirement acts, administration, \$188,700.

Mr. Herridge: I just want to speak for a few minutes on this item, although I had intended to speak for forty minutes. The parliamentary assistant has been over here and he has sort of worn me down.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): He is not going away too, is he?

[Mr. McLure.]

Mr. Herridge: I want to refer to a small group of people in this country who suffer a certain hardship and injustice by the present superannuation act and the regulations. I have run into an occasional case here and there, and I am just bringing this matter to the attention of the minister to see whether something can be done to amend the regulations or order in council or anything of that sort, just in order to take in a small number of people, as far as I can see, who are affected in various departments of government.

I am just going to mention one case in order to illustrate the situation. In the city of Nelson we have a young man who has been twenty years in the employ of the post office. He was eight years in the employ of the postmaster before the post office was made a revenue post office. Then it was made a revenue post office and he became a civil servant; and he has been twelve years a civil servant. When he became a civil servant he was allowed to come under the superannuation act, I understand, as were the postmasters. But at that time neither postmasters nor clerks were permitted to pay up back superannuation for the years they had previously been employed. But since that time, owing to the order in council that was passed on December 24, 1948, I understand the postmaster has been permitted to pay up his superannuation for all the years he has served the government, even including the time prior to his actually being a civil servant. There are in that post office a few men who paid superannuation since but who are not permitted to pay their back superannuation as the postmaster did. One of these young men has contracted an incurable disease. He has been in hospital for six months and cannot possibly live but a short time longer. He is actually dying at the present time and because of the provisions of the superannuation act, his wife is left with that limited amount of security.

I want to ask the minister if he thinks it is possible for this matter to be given consideration, not only for the sake of this unfortunate civil servant but for that of a small number of others also who are willing to pay up their superannuation in order to provide their wives with a satisfactory security. The sad part of this case also is that this young man's sick leave allowance has now also been discontinued by the post office, so that he and his wife are absolutely flat after his having worked for this country as a civil servant for twenty years. I should like the minister to make a study of the situation.

Mr. Abbott: I shall be glad to do that. My hon. friend and I have had a little bit