

## SUPPLY

## DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

The house in committee of supply, Mr. LaVergne in the chair.

Department of Fisheries—salaries and disbursements of fishery officers and guardians, fisheries patrol and fisheries protection services, \$1,022,000.

Mr. NEILL: This vote, which is a very large one and, indeed, the largest one in fisheries estimates, reflects the activities of the department or what might be called the active efforts towards conservation of the industry, the work actually done in the field as compared with the overhead expenses of the clerical staff. I am glad to see that the cut in this estimate has been less than that in many others, and while on account of the increasing demand made by the growing necessities of the industry, we regret to see this item cut at all, we realize we must make sacrifices in this branch along with others of the government. We have been told very often, and quite properly so, by the Prime Minister how under present economic conditions expenses must be cut and cut to a very great extent. We see that recorded in the slashing of the estimates by many millions of dollars. Some of us perhaps think the slashing has gone to the point where it has ceased to be economical and has become almost wasteful inasmuch as a penny saved is sometimes a pound lost later on. But we must recognize the fact that where economy can be practised with any regard for efficiency, it must be done.

I wish to say a few words by way of suggesting a method whereby the minister in this case can make a very considerable saving in expenditure without, I think, lessening in the least the efficiency of the service to be carried out; in fact, I think it would increase the efficiency of the service. I refer to the expenditures in connection with the Vancouver office of the Department of Fisheries. I am comparing this with the Nova Scotia office, and I think the comparison is a good one. Conditions are not exactly similar, but the activities are very much the same. In Nova Scotia they have five district supervisors; in British Columbia, while technically they have only three, let us say they have four. In Nova Scotia the number of inspectors is thirty-three, while in British Columbia it is thirty-two, but I notice that the expenditure for the thirty-two is very much less than for the thirty-three in Nova Scotia. This bears out what I have always maintained, namely,

that the inspectors in British Columbia, taking into consideration the work and responsibility involved, are underpaid. As regards the special guardians, they are not enumerated in the Auditor General's report, but the amount expended on them is given and we can gauge by the amount expended some idea of the work carried on. In Nova Scotia in the last year of which the Auditor General's report has record, there was spent for special guardians \$56,669, and in British Columbia only \$28,714, or just about one-half. So the situation is this: Nova Scotia has more supervisors, more inspectors and apparently double the number of special guardians, if we gauge it by the expenditure on them. That represents the work done on the ground where we get dollar value for every dollar expended, money actually spent in the work of an official in the district.

The situation is very different when we come to the cost of the clerical end of the office. In Nova Scotia the number on the staff is fourteen, in British Columbia it is twenty-four, or an increase of 70 per cent. In Nova Scotia the cost of the staff is \$15,717, and in British Columbia it is \$31,509, or an increase of 106 per cent, showing that in the Vancouver office they are paying not only more people but higher salaries than in the Nova Scotia office. Then there are a couple of odd items under the heads of "disbursements" and "various"; they apply to both districts. The disbursements, being what the name would indicate, that is odd payments, amount in Nova Scotia to \$3,099, while in British Columbia they are more than double, or \$6,491. In the case of "various," which again indicates the nature of the expenditure, the amount spent in Nova Scotia was \$3,327 and in British Columbia, \$12,448, or nearly four times as much, making the total cost in Nova Scotia of the clerical staff at the head office, \$22,143, and in British Columbia, \$50,448, or something like 140 per cent greater.

By analyzing the figures in the Auditor General's report, because that is where I get my information, we find that the increased cost in British Columbia is due to three things: first, a much bigger salary paid to the chief supervisor; second, lavish expenditure on those items of "disbursements" and "various," and, third, too large a staff, or at least many more than in Nova Scotia. Let us compare the total costs of the work on the ground. The three items I have enumerated, namely, district supervisors, inspectors and guardians cost in Nova Scotia a grand total of \$152,782, and in the expenditure of that sum they spent