

there is another remaining item in vote 15 which Mr. Black will deal with. It is rather difficult to clean these items up. However, I understood from the Chairman on Tuesday that Mr. Anderson would handle all the matters relating to his interests at the present time.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, are there any questions in connection with item 20, administration?

Mr. HERRIDGE: I was going to ask Mr. Anderson if he could explain to the committee the present arrangement for appeal board hearings, for instance, in the country: I am thinking of British Columbia. How frequently would members of the commission visit interior parts?

Mr. T. D. ANDERSON (*Chairman, Canadian Pension Commission*): Normally once a year in the interior. We try to do what appears to be necessary to keep these appeals reasonably well up to date. Normally they go only once a year to the interior. However, if there are any large number of cases pending we go more frequently. As I say, normally it is once a year. Once a year has been sufficient in recent years.

Mr. HERRIDGE: But suppose you had one or two cases in the interior, would you call these men into Vancouver, for instance?

Mr. ANDERSON: Yes. If the time ever comes when we find there are only a relatively few cases to be dealt with annually we probably will stop sending boards into the interior and will call them all into Vancouver.

Mr. HERRIDGE: And, I suppose in that connection their expenses would be paid?

Mr. ANDERSON: Yes. I want to point out one or two things. I do not want to make a long speech, just one or two highlights. First of all, I think it is significant that the total annual liability for pensions has gone down substantially, as you notice over at page 507. However, that is for pensions. The salary costs have increased as shown in the administrative column on page 506. Of course, the reason for the increase in the salaries appropriation is that these were increased last year. The number of personnel—that is, our total establishment—has decreased. But, owing to the fact that salaries generally were increased the cost has gone up slightly.

The only other item which I think has increased is office stationery and supplies which, of course, results from just the normal increase in the cost of these materials.

Also, it will be interesting to you to know that the total number of pensioners—that is, the total number of people who are drawing pensions—has decreased slightly. It decreased a little last year and decreased again this year. This may or may not be a trend. However, the fact that it has happened two years in succession may indicate we are finally over the hump and going down hill.

Mr. Chairman, I think that is all I wanted to draw your attention to particularly, but if there are any questions in respect of any items in the estimates we will be only too glad to try to answer them.

Mr. CHATTERTON: Mr. Chairman, I have a general question. Are you satisfied with the benefit of the doubt provisions in the present legislation and are you satisfied that it is being generously implemented by the commission?

Mr. ANDERSON: Yes.

Mr. CHATTERTON: I receive more letters in respect of complaints concerning decisions of the commission than any other matters with regard to veterans' affairs. I think in some cases this is because the applicant is not made fully aware of the reasons for the decision. He receives a letter which is cold, hard and sometimes difficult to understand. Have you considered perhaps having the pensions advocate call in the applicant to explain the reasons for the commission's decision?