

Supply—Re-establishment

capable officials, but they preside over a staff of only four. Does it not look to be just a trifle top-heavy, \$11,000 for two first class, highly trained, competent men to preside over so small a staff? Frankly, I think the time has arrived when we must look that fact in the face.

Mr. BELAND: I am very glad, Mr. Chairman, that my hon. friend has asked the question. The number of employees in the department is not 6; it is 2,422.

Mr. STEVENS: That is very nice. That is the number in this particular branch?

Mr. BELAND: Yes. I have endeavoured to explain that originally, under the former administration, only six or perhaps a few more, perhaps ten or twelve in all, were mentioned in the civil government estimates, the reason being that the large majority, practically the totality of the members of the department, some 8,000, were only temporary employees. They have been reduced in number very considerably year after year. During the former administration the number of employees was reduced in some years by over 1,000, perhaps 1,500; three years ago the number was reduced by 1,000, and two years ago by some 700 or 800. Last year again, the number was reduced by 600, or thereabouts. The number of employees still drawing salary in the department is 2,422.

Mr. STEVENS: What does that include?

Mr. BELAND: It includes all the employees in the administrative work, all the employees in the Vet Craft shops, all the employees in the limb factory, all the employees and doctors in the hospitals of the department, all the physicians who are employed full-time outside of the hospitals for pension examination, and so forth. In a word, it includes all the employees of the department. The number of these employees on the 1st January, 1924, speaking from memory, was 2,922. On the 1st of April last, the number was 2,422, so that during thirteen months, continuing the reduction process which had been started, the number of employees had been reduced by 500.

Perhaps this would be a proper occasion to set right some opinion which has been expressed as regards the cost of administration of the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment. Speaking personally, I have not the remotest desire to be in charge of the department one day longer than I am desired, but I must say that the work which is new being discharged in Canada in connection with this department will be maintained for a large number of years to come, and the num-

[Mr. Stevens.]

ber of employees engaged in the work of the department will be reduced by a smaller margin as the years go by. The time will come, I should say within five or six or perhaps ten years, when you will not be able for a long number of years thereafter to reduce the number any further. And why? Because the department has the whole administration of pensions, which involves the paying out in one year of \$34,000,000. It would be a simple matter to pay \$34,000,000 to one man, but it is an altogether different thing when you have to pay pensions to 64,000 different people every month, and when a large number of those pensioners are not permanent in their disability, thousands of them in the course of one year being either reduced, cancelled or increased, thousands of new pensions being awarded during one year, and hundreds, if not thousands, of children being born to pensioners and who have also to be taken into account. That is one feature of the work.

But there is another feature, and that is the paying of pensions to Imperials in Canada. The amount that is being paid on account of the Imperial government to Imperial pensioners in Canada is around \$10,000,000. The department is acting in Canada for the Imperial government in regard to these pensioners.

Mr. ROSS (Kingston): Is not that a large increase? Last year it was only \$7,000,000.

Mr. BELAND: Yes, there is a large increase.

Mr. ROSS (Kingston): To what is the increase due?

Mr. BELAND: That includes also the pay and allowances which are paid to Imperial pensioners who are under treatment in Canada.

Mr. CALDWELL: Is this \$10,000,000 of Imperial pensions included in the \$34,000,000?

Mr. BELAND: No, it is in addition to that.

Mr. HOEY: Do the Imperial authorities pay the cost of administering those pensions.

Mr. BELAND: They do. We are reimbursed, but we have to provide the money in the first place. We have a section in the department which is called the Imperial section, there being 105 employees in that section alone.

Mr. ROSS (Kingston): The increase in Imperial pensions seems enormous. Are there more Imperial pensioners coming out?