

Supply—Trade and Commerce

have supplementary estimates dealing with departmental administration. At that time they may have the opportunity to discuss matters in general in connection with the Department of Trade and Commerce.

Mr. Blackmore: I suggest that the subject to which the hon. member for Yale referred might properly be discussed under the next item which deals with international trade relations. What would be the reaction of the Chair to having the discussion at that time?

The Chairman: I decide questions of order only when they arise. We are now discussing item 445.

Mr. Jones: I believe I could ask a question which would be relevant, under the heading of economic research. My understanding is that economic research has reference to the ability of other nations to purchase our surplus produce. That being so, what are present indications for the marketing of Okanagan and other Canadian apples in Great Britain this year?

Mr. Howe: The outlook is not good, on account of the dollar shortage.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): I am not sure if I am in order in asking the question I have in mind. I would ask the minister however if he knows anything with respect to the sale of salt codfish in the European market which, up to this date, has been financed through sterling held by the Canadian government in London.

Mr. Howe: I can report to my hon. friend that our expert on fish tells me that the prospects for the sale of codfish are good.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): In Europe?

Mr. Howe: In Europe and elsewhere.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): How is it to be financed?

Mr. Howe: Well, I think they pay cash for it.

Mr. Blackmore: That means dollars.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): If it is still permissible to ask a question, I should like to ask one. The minister referred to economists, and his observation was that the forecasts they made were extremely good. I wish he would say a word further as to the nature of their work. Perhaps he could give us an illustration of the kind of questions put to them, and in particular whether there are any questions affecting the direct conduct of this or that business.

Mr. Howe: The economics division provides economic intelligence service for the department. It undertakes to keep in close touch

with economic conditions in Canada and make appraisals of prospective developments. The division replaces the former economics research division and economics forecasting division. In performing these functions the division maintains under review a number of aspects of the general economic situation including production, employment, trade, investment, income and prices as well as conditions in specific industries and areas. These studies are not made elsewhere in a comparable form and are consequently of assistance to associated departments of the government as a whole as well as to our own department.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Does this division work entirely separately? There are a considerable number of economic sections throughout the government. I understood the minister to state a minute ago that one of the services this division performs is for his department. Is there a pooling of talent in the various economic divisions throughout the government?

Mr. Howe: There is a pooling of information. Other departments may have problems which are not within the scope of this particular division and for that purpose they may require economists to do work of a different nature than that performed by the economists in the Department of Trade and Commerce. I have given my hon. friend an outline of the work performed for the Department of Trade and Commerce.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): The minister knows his own experts and no doubt thinks highly of them. He knows what their capacities are and what their work is. But who knows the experts in the various departments? Who can assure us that there is no duplication? Who takes an over-all view? It has to be a pretty expert man who is an expert on experts.

Mr. Howe: I can speak only for myself. I assure my hon. friend that I do not do that task, as I am busy enough looking after my own department.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): That is a very definite but very unsatisfactory answer. If the minister cannot answer my question I think we ought to have some indication where we can get an answer. In view of what the minister has said I do not think there is much point in my pressing it now, but I would like to have an indication as to where it can be pressed because I do not think it should be left unanswered.

Item agreed to.

446. International trade relations division, including investigating and reporting on commercial relations and foreign tariffs and a contribution of \$6,300 to the international customs tariffs bureau, \$150,156.