

Supply—Finance

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): There is a kind of super-commitment here, apparently, in the amount of \$200,000. Is this in connection with your bullion transactions?

Mr. Abbott: It is the Vancouver branch of the mint.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I still do not understand: "to authorize commitments against future years in the amount of \$200,000." That seems a large amount, and it does not explain itself.

Mr. Abbott: That is for the construction of an addition to the mint. I am sorry; I did not understand my hon. friend's question.

Item agreed to.

Administration of various acts and costs of special functions—

The wartime prices and trade board—

94. Administration, \$1,907,142.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I would like from the minister a general statement as to just how the reduction is progressing. I am surprised to find that it still costs nearly \$2 million, though I realize that is a great reduction from previous years. I should like the number of employees as compared with a year ago, the amount of office space, the number of offices, and one or two other relevant details.

Mr. Abbott: As my hon. friend is aware, the administration of the emergency import control comes under the wartime prices and trade board. He realizes that this is not simply price control administration, that it administers rental control, the cleaning up of payment of subsidies, and so on. As at April 30, 1949, there were 1,049 employees. As at April 1, 1950, there were 695 employees. I am afraid I have not the information at the moment as to the floor space, but I can get it.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I should like some information with respect to travelling expenses under this head. What was the amount spent on travelling expenses last year?

Mr. Abbott: The estimate this year is \$168,000, which represents a reduction of some \$32,000 from last year. The actual expenditure last year was \$169,678. This year we estimate \$168,000 or approximately the same amount as spent last year. I would hope that would not be achieved, but until we know what happens to rental control it is rather difficult to say.

Mr. Diefenbaker: What was the total amount paid in legal fees last year?

Mr. Abbott: Legal and audit are together, so I am afraid I shall have to get my friend

[Mr. Abbott.]

a break-down of that. It amounted to \$125,000, but the major portion of that would be legal fees.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Will the minister give the three largest items for legal fees during the year, and to whom those payments were made?

Mr. Abbott: I would have to get that information, I have not got it here. It is rather difficult to know what particular detail is required. Of course, the information is available and I can get it.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Will the minister place that on *Hansard* along with the other information I requested?

Mr. Abbott: It is sometimes helpful if I know these questions in advance, but I realize that is difficult. Some hon. members do let me know when they want particular information.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am learning all the time, Mr. Chairman. Now I learn that the minister is given the questions in advance.

Mr. Abbott: The hon. member for Greenwood was very considerate in that respect.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I did not know that practice was followed. It is interesting.

Mr. Abbott: I do not suggest it needs to be done on general items, but where particular questions are asked it is helpful.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I want to know still more about this service. The minister has told us about the emergency import control and subsidies. I want to get a little more idea, because I am still not satisfied. Perhaps if I had a little more information I would be better satisfied.

Mr. Abbott: What information is it my hon. friend wants?

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Here we have a reduction, it is true, of a million dollars. The minister has also pointed out that the number of employees in the department has been reduced. I want to know if that is the wartime prices and trade board itself that has been reduced from 1,049 to 695. Are the 695 dealing with subsidy payments, and if so—

Mr. Abbott: No, I said the wartime prices and trade board, but it is really the next item, the commodity prices stabilization corporation. I was putting them together, but it is that corporation which is cleaning up the various subsidy claims.

Item agreed to.