

next item, but he does not seem to have done it.

Mr. BLAIN. What is Mr. Menzies' total salary?

Mr. BRODEUR. \$2,110.

Mr. TAYLOR (Leeds). The minister stated a moment ago that it was only \$1,430.

Mr. BLAIN. When Mr. Menzies is receiving this salary, does the minister think it is fair that this same officer should rent a house to the department?

Mr. BRODEUR. I understand that Mr. Menzies works the greatest part of the year in the Toronto office, and the balance of the year at Agincourt making magnetic observations. His salary is \$1,426 for his work in Toronto, and \$690 for his work at Agincourt. He resides in Toronto, and only goes to Agincourt at certain parts of the year to make magnetic observations.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Is it customary for the government to pay an employee \$175 a month, and then rent his house from him?

Mr. BRODEUR. I suppose the house is under our control, because the instruments are kept there.

Mr. JAMESON. May I ask the minister what useful purpose is being served by this service, which he says has now been in operation for forty years?

Mr. BRODEUR. There is no doubt that the service has been of great use to the country in giving information as to the weather prospects. I see by a report which has been made with regard to magnetic observations, there was a question as to whether the instrument used in Canada was as good as that used in the United States. If I may judge by the report which we had in our hands from Mr. Stupart, these observations are of a scientific character, and are used by scientists to a large extent.

Meteorological service, \$143,000.

Mr. BURRELL. With regard to this expenditure for meteorological stations, it has been suggested, in discussing this matter in British Columbia, that the government might well deem it worth while to pay a small fee to these men who have charge of the various stations. Now the practice has been, I understand, to get certain men to take charge of meteorological work, to provide them with instruments, and they are to keep a record and make an annual report. I believe a great many of the men are good men, and there is a lot of good work done. I do not know whether the minister quite understands how important this work is in what we call the semi-arid

Mr. BRODEUR.

belt of British Columbia. An accurate knowledge over a long period of the total annual precipitation is one of the first things that is required. We find that men coming in to make big investments, especially for fruit-growing purposes, in parts of our semi-arid belt, attach great importance to this information. In some districts there may be a precipitation of 10 or 12 inches, and in other parts of from 14 even up to 20 inches. This difference will make a considerable difference in the value of that particular section for certain purposes, as to the necessity of irrigation works, and so on. The present practice is this: That a man who is given one of these instruments in charge by the government, will do his work faithfully for a year or two, and then perhaps he may fall sick or may go away on a holiday, and he is not in a position to pay other men to do his work. There is consequently a hiatus in the observations, that renders valueless the whole of that work, which, to be of value, must be carried on over a consecutive period of years. I would like to impress upon the minister that the great importance of this work would justify a nominal fee or salary, a small sum paid to the men who have charge of that work, especially in the fruit district which stretches from the Kootenay district to west Yale.

Mr. BRODEUR. Are there not some stations to-day in that district?

Mr. BURRELL. There are quite a number, where I presume the work is carried on under the direction of the head office in Victoria. As I understand it, these men who are occupying sub-stations report to the Victoria office to Mr. Baynes Reed. But it seems to me that the importance of the information, if carried over a period of years, is so great as to justify the minister in paying more attention to this service that he has been doing, because we have hundreds of thousands of acres in that belt the value of which is affected by the result of these observations of the rainfall in different districts. I think the government would be justified in making a small appropriation of that kind.

Mr. BRODEUR. I will be glad to take into consideration the suggestions of my hon. friend. I was under the impression, however, that reports were being constantly made without interruption. If there are cases to the contrary, I will see about it.

Mr. BURRELL. I am not speaking of any specific cases. But I do know that one of the first questions asked by capitalists coming into that country, and by investors generally, is as to the average annual precipitation in these districts, and in many cases they fail to obtain the information. However good and reliable the man may be who is in charge of a station,