

tremendous debt to meet in consequence of the war is one reason why we should engage in this sort of work. My experience—and I am sure it is the case with other gentlemen—is that I am frequently approached by men in my province who are confronted with some problem for the solution of which they desire scientific assistance. They cannot very well purchase this knowledge; they are not in a position to go abroad and bring into this country experts who would solve such problems, and this work should be done by the country, because it will aid in developing our commerce and our trade. Great care should be exercised in the selection of the board. I think a mistake has already been made; in fact, the whole board is a mistake. I do not wish to say anything more about it, because it is not pleasant discussing the personnel of a commission of this kind for, after all, the men on it are distinguished men and amongst our best citizens. But it is possible to make a very grave mistake in judgment in selecting men for this work even if you do take them from amongst the most distinguished men of our universities. A great problem for a body of this kind would be in connection with soil fertilization. Nothing could be more important than that to this country. If this commission can ascertain some method of providing for the farmers of this country a fertilizer, in sufficient quantities and at a fair price, they will be doing something which will be worth millions of dollars to this country, and the expenditure of \$100,000 would be a small matter in accomplishing such a result. What does the minister purpose doing in co-ordinating the work to be done by the commission and that which is now done by other departments? There are scientific men in the Department of Agriculture. There is a vote in the supplementary estimates of \$6,000 for forestry studies. I do not know if it is advisable to make an expenditure for that purpose just at present. There are in the Department of Agriculture now some technical officials whose work is particularly along such lines.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: Forestry lines?

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: Yes.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: That is in the Interior Department.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: In the Interior Department to some extent, and in the Department of Agriculture there is at least one gentleman whose work is along that

[Mr. A. K. Maclean.]

line. In the Mines Branch there are quite a number of scientific men who devote their time to the scientific side of our mines and minerals, and you will probably find scientific men in other departments. Is the minister going to have them work together or separately? Could not their labours be co-ordinated? Possibly it might be advisable to take the scientific men from all the departments and put them into this branch.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: That is exactly what is being very successfully done, and with the greatest good-will on the part of all the departments. They understand each other, and the council works with them and they work with the council. The idea is to co-ordinate and to bring, so to speak, into focus all those different agencies that have been doing excellent work, each by itself. My hon. friend is quite mistaken as to the number of men engaged in forestry work connected with the Department of Agriculture. They are in the Interior Department and in the Conservation Commission. They are working in strict conjunction, and the experiment, for which this vote is in the estimates to-day, is to be carried out by the experts in the Interior Department. It is not by any means a duplication of energy. The intention is to avoid that and to co-ordinate and concentrate the work upon the development of the resources of Canada.

Mr. SCHAFFNER: I understood my hon. friend from Halifax to say that some of these men are devoting only a portion of their time and energies to this work. If that is so, how many of the council are devoting their whole time and energies to the work? Some of them, surely.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: The only one who is doing that is the administrative chairman. My hon. friend must remember that these gentlemen have been selected because of their eminence and practical knowledge in certain lines of investigation. It was never contemplated that they should themselves go into the laboratory and conduct experiments. They constitute a committee to set to work, and keep at work, and co-ordinate all the different agencies, and to apply whatever money we may appropriate for work along these lines. All of these men, with the exception of Dr. MacCallum, are giving their services free, but that does not mean that they are simply taking a holiday and taking no interest in the matter. These men have been at work now for more than a year, and I know what