Mr. Gregg: I believe the hon. member was not in the house this afternoon when this matter was discussed under the administration item. In response to the hon. member for Kamloops I explained that a good deal of the work formerly reflected in the estimates for war veterans allowance is now being done under welfare services. He will notice a corresponding increase for travelling and other things under that heading. I would like also to add, however, that even with that I will need to ask in the supplementary estimates for more money for war veterans allowance in order to do just that thing which he has mentioned, namely, travelling by members of that board.

Mr. McLure: I should like to know what authority is given to the war veterans allowance board in a city like Charlottetown. What authority have they in the granting of a war veterans allowance? Is their report to Ottawa sufficient to decide the matter, or does Ottawa decide on the evidence produced by this board?

Mr. Gregg: The district office in Charlottetown has exactly the same authority in this and other matters as Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver or any of the larger cities. It is a complete set-up in itself. If my hon. friend wishes to look into that more fuly, I am sure he would be interested in the discussions which ranged around the amendment to the War Veterans Allowance Act which passed through the Commons within the last few weeks.

By virtue of that amendment, we have undertaken to decentralize the work of the war veterans allowance board. Whereas in the past the board at Charlottetown looked into the applications, made recommendations to the board in Ottawa, and the board studied the matter and arrived at its decision, it is the intention in the future to have these decisions reached at Charlottetown. The members of the board will visit the local authorities from time to time for the purpose of co-ordination and to hear appeals from local decisions.

Mr. Jones: Will the minister explain the last item, "professional and special services", reduced by $12,000.

Mr. Gregg: Because of the transfer to welfare services. The hon. member will find it reflected there.

Item agreed to.

536. Veterans insurance, $77,495.

Mr. Lennard: In connection with this item, will the minister indicate how many applications there have been during the past several years, and how many policies were issued?

Mr. Mutch: Policies or applications?

Mr. Lennard: Both.

Mr. Gregg: I may state that during the past year—my hon. friend does not want the amount of money, just the number of applications?

Mr. Lennard: The number of applications, and the number of policies issued.

Mr. Gregg: As at April 30, 1950, a total of 27,337 applications had been received. At the same date, April 30, 1950, the policies in force numbered 23,824.

Mr. Fulton: What was spent last year on advertising and publicity under this item?

Mr. Gregg: There was $44 spent.

Mr. Fulton: I notice in the last issue of the public accounts which we have, reporting on the 1948-49 expenditures, advertising and publicity, which was estimated that year at $15,000, was allotted $13,000, and there was spent only $817.92. It appears that the estimate under this heading has been running consistently in excess of the actual expenditures on advertising and publicity in connection with veterans insurance at this time. Would the minister consider reducing the estimate under this heading? There is a consistent record, if I may call it that, of overestimating and underspending. I do not think it is good estimating practice to ask for so much more than is actually needed.

Mr. Gregg: I believe that without question there was an overestimation last year. The main reason for this amount this year is the fact that in 1951 the act runs out, I mean the cut-off date becomes effective. We feel it is important this year that all veterans be notified of that fact, so they may be able to get in under the Veterans Insurance Act before the cut-off date becomes effective.

Mr. Fulton: Has the department a definite advertising program worked out by which the committee can be satisfied that something in the neighbourhood of $5,000 will be spent?

Mr. Gregg: The cut-off date is in February of 1951, and plans are being worked out. The campaign plan is not completed yet, but thought is being given to it.

Mr. Gillis: Mr. Chairman, I know the cut-off date was proposed for 1951, but is it necessary to cut out the veterans insurance at that time? Why can the insurance not be allowed to run? I bet you there are thousands of Canadian veterans who came back from this war, like