

I have said this before in the House of Commons, but there are some people who believe that if they make a thing so complicated that they cannot understand it themselves, other people should be able to make it work.

Mr. GRAYDON: Is that the job you are working on?

Mr. MITCHELL: With all due respects to some of the people who have resigned from selective service, I would rather have good common sense such as we are using at the moment.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): I think the boards in Manitoba are doing their job reasonably well, but there are inequalities in the way in which this thing is handled in other parts of Canada.

Item agreed to.

War-time bureau of technical personnel, \$220,500.

Mr. GRAYDON: Could the minister explain the work of this bureau?

Mr. MITCHELL: I think I pointed it out quite clearly in the exposition I gave when these estimates were first introduced. The war-time Bureau of technical personnel is to all intents and purposes a selective service for the professions. It was established prior to selective service itself. At that time I was the secretary of the labour coordination committee or the man-power committee of the government, and it was decided to try a modified form of selective service on the professional classes after representations had been made by various engineering societies. I think this is as efficient an organization along selective service lines that we have in the Department of Labour. It has rendered distinguished service to industry and the army.

Mr. GRAYDON: The minister thinks it is a little better than the others?

Mr. MITCHELL: It has been in operation longer.

Mr. ADAMSON: To what extent has this bureau been used? I happen to be a member of two professional societies, and some time ago considerable criticism was offered about the limited use which had been made of this bureau.

Mr. MITCHELL: I believe the total registration is 30,000, and the number of placements last year—I speak from memory—was between 1,500 and 2,000.

Mr. ADAMSON: Fifteen hundred out of 30,000?

Mr. MITCHELL: Yes.

Mr. STIRLING: That is last year.

Mr. ADAMSON: Has the minister any idea of the total placements?

Mr. MITCHELL: I am talking about last year only.

Item agreed to.

Mr. GRAYDON: Does this finish the Department of Labour, including sundry services?

The CHAIRMAN: I believe it was understood that the three items would be taken together.

Sundry services, \$86,022.

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): This item of sundry services would seem to offer me an opportunity to make a few general observations with regard to a rather critical condition which exists at the present time in the larger cities. We all admit that there is a shortage of man-power for special work which is sometimes needed to be done by the transportation systems and those engaged in providing storage facilities. For example, a cargo of sugar may land in Toronto and there is no help to unload the ship, which is held up. National selective service may not have a priority rating for sugar. These priorities are confidential and no one seems to know just what they are. The local organizations do the best they can, but quite often they do not have very much success.

I can cite another case. Eighteen cars of wool were landed in Toronto on June 4, and some of them are still on the track under demurrage. Wool is a war necessity, and some direction should be given to national selective service so that they can deal with emergencies of this kind and avoid the tie-up of railroad facilities and boxcars. Thirty cars of coca beans were sent to a manufacturer whose resultant product is sent to the troops, but they found themselves unable to move this commodity.

The fault lies in not having taken hold of this problem at the outset. As I said some two years ago in this chamber, there should be some way of knowing where a man of a certain vocation is in this country, so that he can be located to do the work for which he is best fitted. For instance, here is a firm in Toronto manufacturing glycerine. They lose a man and there is no way of knowing where he is. By accident he is found to be working in a factory making pop. Is it more essential that we should be manufacturing glycerine or manufacturing pop? The man who manufactures the glycerine had no means of knowing where the man was.