

Mr. McLURE: We ought to know what our one-fifth share of the raw material amounts to; that is, the number of skins. In some years 100,000 skins are taken; I think last year something like 80,000 skins were obtained. Canada was supposed to get one-fifth of those as her proportion; and from the report we had last season part of those skins were processed in the United States and a small part in Great Britain. There is no processing plant for them in Canada; consequently they have to be processed elsewhere. When the ceiling was removed from these skins last season the selling price went up by more than fifty per cent, and I understand that those sold on the United States market averaged something like \$72 gross per skin. Well, with a total of 75,000 or 80,000 skins, how does it come that we have such a small net profit?

Item agreed to.

LEGISLATION

House of Commons—

663. Estimates of the sergeant at arms—further amount required, \$10,000.

Mr. STEWART (Winnipeg North): Again I am going to bring to the attention of the house a matter I have brought up on several occasions; that is, the case of the protective, cleaning and messenger staffs of this house. The basic wage of these employees is \$4 a day in each category, though I should think that according to responsibility and the worth of the work done there might well be a distinction as between these three groups sufficiently great to merit some differentiation in the basic wage. I would go further and say that for the parliament of Canada to be employing men at \$4 a day is rather absurd. Last year I urged the government to review the wages paid. At that time His Honour the Speaker said that the matter would be taken into consideration, and that if it should be possible to do something in order to be fair to these men it would be done with pleasure. I should like to know what has been done between last December and the present time in order to be fair to the employees of this house. Furthermore, the day this house rose last December I pointed out that ex-service men were to be laid off just before Christmas by a government which was supposed to be keenly desirous of aiding returned men. I said that it was callous and heartless. The Minister of Veterans Affairs got rather wrathful and said that the case of these men had been brought to his attention and that he had taken action instead of talking about it.

Mr. MACKENZIE: That is right.

[Mr. McLure.]

Mr. STEWART (Winnipeg North): Those words of the Minister of Veterans Affairs were full of sound and fury but signified very little, because the action the government took was similar to its inaction in other respects. Fourteen ex-service men were laid off from their employment in this house last December. Their average service overseas was almost four and a half years. Seven were married; seven were single. The government promised it would do its best to look after these men, but it did not do so. Three of the fourteen obtained employment; I do not know what happened to the other eleven until they came back to the house. That is no way to look after the employees of this House of Commons, and I should like to know what is going to happen to these employees during the Easter recess. Are we to lay them off again in the same callous way, men who have given four and a half years of their lives to fighting for us? What plan does the government have for these men when this house prorogues later in the year? I think we are entitled to know now just what plans the government has in mind in order to see that employees of this house are given satisfactory employment when the house is not in session.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have listened very carefully to the remarks of the hon. member. He and all other hon. members may be sure that the officers of the House of Commons are doing everything possible to be agreeable to the employees; and the Speaker of the House of Commons, in dealing with the employees, never forgets that he is the representative of members on both sides of the house. Whenever we have to take on a new employee the first question asked is, "Are you a returned soldier?" We do not take on any new employee who is not a veteran. No one likes to dismiss employees who have given good service. The Speaker of the house and the officials feel the same way; we do not like to dismiss anyone, veteran or not, who has served for many years. Unfortunately, however, some of our employees have advanced in years, and it has been suggested throughout Canada that on reaching a certain age men should withdraw from employment in order to provide work for younger men, veterans and so on.

In regard to the wages paid, particularly to the constables. I am informed that the salaries paid in the House of Commons are as good as, if not better than, those paid in the different departments of the government. I should not like to resume my seat without seeking to impress upon hon. members that their Speaker is doing everything possible to give the house the best possible service at the