

Supply—Trade and Commerce

competent men and women who have contributed greatly to the maintenance of the standard that has been set. The bureau is growing. Its work becomes more diversified all the time, but the quality of excellence continues. I felt I should like to say that word on this item.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Could I just say a word also, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the tribute that has been paid. I think that in Herbert Marshall we have one of the great statisticians of the world. He has been president of nearly every statistical association in the world, and recently he was made president of the inter-American statistical institute that met in Rio de Janeiro this year. He has a tremendous reputation, as had his predecessors. I think I can say that the statistical branch of this government is recognized around the world as one of the top organizations of its kind. We receive many requests for the loan of senior officers to set up statistical organizations in other countries. I am extremely proud of our organization.

Mr. Nicholson: I should like to associate myself with what has been said by the hon. member for Eglinton. I think in another year the minister or his parliamentary assistant might arrange for an official visit to the bureau by members of parliament. Some of his colleagues, such as the Minister of National Health and Welfare and the Minister of National Defence from time to time arrange for us tours that are most interesting. I cannot think of any more interesting half day than one spent over at the bureau. I have been there myself, but I hesitate to take the time of the staff to show one person around when it would be possible to conduct a larger group.

I think it is a great pity that, when such an expensive building was being constructed, provision was not made to have it air conditioned. I know the Minister of Public Works must take the final responsibility for that, but when this sort of service is being given twelve months of the year I think some explanation should be given as to why a modern building such as the bureau was not air conditioned. I wonder whether the minister can explain why that mistake was made.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): As far as I know, Mr. Chairman, the members of the House of Commons are the only servants of the people in Ottawa who are entitled to air conditioning. It is a rule of the government that there is no air conditioning in Ottawa. It was therefore not thought wise to put air conditioning in the bureau.

[Mr. Fleming.]

Mr. Nicholson: I can quite understand that rule at the time of confederation but surely, in 1950, that is a rule that should not be observed any longer. I think it is a frightful waste of public funds to have civil servants expected to do an efficient day's work in the city of Ottawa in the sort of climate we have had here for the last two weeks. I do not think it would be very expensive to air condition some of these buildings. I suggest that the minister discuss with his colleagues the changing of this Victorian idea that air conditioning is unnecessary.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): I might say that I am a Victorian. I subscribe to the idea that we can get along without air conditioning in the city of Ottawa, which is in the northerly direction. We usually have our share of cooler weather.

Mr. Fleming: There are many people in this country working without air conditioning.

Mr. Nicholson: If the private firms in Ottawa, such as Loblaws and the department stores, are finding that it pays good dividends to air condition their buildings, surely the government of Canada would find that it is much cheaper and better all round to make it possible for their large number of civil servants to be able to do a decent day's work under respectable working conditions. I am sure many of the departments have been obliged to allow their staffs to go home at four o'clock in the afternoon, or an hour earlier than usual, because it was impossible to do efficient work. The cost of air conditioning nowadays is a very small item compared with the total cost of a building such as the bureau.

Mr. Macdonnell: I should like to say just a word in support of what the hon. member for Eglinton said about the constant courtesy and—what is perhaps just as important—the promptness and efficiency that one meets in connection with inquiries addressed to the dominion bureau of statistics. Although this might be slightly irrelevant, in addition I should like to point out that the head of the bureau is a graduate of Queen's University.

I also want to point out to the minister that he gave me an inaccurate piece of information earlier in the evening when I asked him if there were no economists in the dominion bureau of statistics. I want to tell him that I note that nine or ten have crept in. If he looks at page 534 he will find that they are there. I hope their work will be no worse because of the fact that they are economists.