

Supply—Agriculture

in the amount of the deduction that is made, and this is an indication of the value that they place on this type of legislation.

Mr. Harkness: I was rather hoping that in his reply to the hon. member for Prince Albert the minister would have given the number of employees in 1953-54 and the number in 1954-55. He gave the number of employees on the permanent staff, but looking at last year's estimates one sees that there were 40 of those with total salaries of \$139,000, and then there were casuals with a total salary of \$85,000. The number of casual employees is not given. I take it that this sum we are voting today, which is more than double the amount for the permanent staff and the casuals, of \$225,000, is practically all for the casual employees necessary as a result of the disastrous conditions last year. I quite appreciate that such conditions would necessitate the hiring of a considerably increased staff.

However, in addition to that I notice that the travelling expenses were \$104,000, which we voted for this current year, and the extra travelling expenses are \$190,000, which will make a total of \$294,000. In other words, the increase in travelling expenses seems excessive. I wonder if the minister could give us the number of employees, particularly those casual employees, how many extra ones had to be secured because of the crop failure, and why the travelling expenses should go up such a large amount?

There is another point here. The minister said that budgeting for this should be kept down, and I agree with that. It should, I believe, however always be possible to have funds available in the event of crop failure to make these payments. Now, that is what has been done this year, I take it. This amount of \$416,000 which we are voting has already been spent. In other words, it is purely a dead horse for which we are paying at the moment. The only portion of that which would not have been spent is what might happen to be owing in the past month for wages, I presume, and a small amount that might be owing for transportation. Most of this sum has already been spent. I just wondered from what particular votes it was taken, and under what authority, to cover these expenditures which I agree have to be made.

Mr. Harris: Well, Mr. Chairman, we have two votes that provide for money under these circumstances, miscellaneous and unforeseen and a general salaries vote. We have transferred moneys from these two votes to the extent of \$186,000 in one case and \$226,000 in the other. As my hon. friend has

said, this is largely as a result of the additional staff and their cost of administration. I would suppose that the extraordinary increase in travelling allowances was necessitated by the fact the employees had to go around the west to a much greater degree than they had in the past. I think I could make the answer to my hon. friend without offence, by suggesting that this is one job that has to be done in a motor car and not in an office.

Under those circumstances I feel that the travelling expenses are justified. Indeed, I would think my hon. friend would suggest we increase them if necessary to get the work done and get the payments made to the farmers.

Mr. Harkness: You have not the numbers of them?

Mr. Argue: A member of the opposition cannot be asking, on the one hand, that the government accelerate the making of these payments under the Prairie Farm Assistance Act, and on the other hand complain about the extra administrative costs necessitated by the acceleration of the payments. If we are going to ask that the government do everything possible to get these payments into the hands of the farmers as quickly as possible, then that is bound to mean an increase in the administrative costs.

Mr. Lennard: You can check on the accounts, though.

Mr. Argue: Fine, that is very good. A question was asked as to the number of persons employed. I received an answer to a question I asked concerning the number of persons employed under the Prairie Farm Assistance Act for Saskatchewan for 1954, as well as the number employed under the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act. I have not added the figures up, but the answer looks as voluminous as the answer I received a couple of years ago which showed that there were 2,000 persons listed as having received moneys under the Prairie Farm Assistance Act in the way of wages and sustenance, as well as under the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act.

I have, however, made a quick calculation of the number of persons employed under the Prairie Farm Assistance Act in Saskatchewan in 1954, and it appears to me as though there were some 550 persons employed. The minister, if I heard him correctly, said that there were around 46 persons employed on a permanent basis under this act. Could the minister tell me briefly what these 40 or 50 people who are employed on a permanent basis under the Prairie Farm Assistance Act do in a year in which there