

*Inquiries of the Ministry*STEPS TO PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE OF
BALDIC STATES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. My question arises from the current interest being taken by the Soviet union in the Baltic area. Is the government using this opportunity to press for independence of the states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, while answering that question I wonder whether, with the consent of the house, I could refer to a question asked earlier by the hon. member for St. John's East, which I think is equally in order, concerning certain discrimination between children in Poland. I want to assure him that that question will be looked into. This other important matter is, of course, under continuous review.

LABOUR CONDITIONS

TRANSFER OF JURISDICTION OVER NATIONAL
EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): I wish to address a question to the Minister of Labour and ask him when he expects that the national employment service will come under the direct jurisdiction of the Department of Labour.

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of Labour): It is proposed that an item will be placed before the house in the supplementary estimates which will, if approved, effect this transfer. It will be effective following that action by the house.

Mr. Starr: Are any difficulties being experienced in the transfer of this service?

Mr. MacEachen: No, Mr. Speaker. There is a committee of senior civil servants under the chairmanship of Dr. George Davidson examining ways in which this separation might be effected, and this study or examination is still continuing. It is as a result of the work of this particular group that action is being taken in this way to sever the national employment service from the unemployment insurance commission.

[Later:]

Mr. T. S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question

[Mr. Speaker.]

to the Minister of Labour. It relates to a question asked of him a little earlier by the hon. member for Ontario regarding the transfer of the national employment service to labour department jurisdiction. If I heard the minister's reply correctly he indicated that a special vote would be introduced in this connection. I wonder whether the minister would agree that this vote could be referred to the industrial relations committee so the whole proposal could be studied in some depth by members of this house.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, the policy decision to make this transfer was announced in the house some months ago, and it follows from the recommendation of the Gill committee, the national employment committee and other persons interested in the effective functioning of the national employment service. Inasmuch as this vote will be dealt with in committee I think we will be able to have a pretty good discussion on its purposes at that time.

Mr. Barnett: I am sorry but I could not hear the latter part of the minister's reply.

Mr. MacEachen: The point I made was that this particular item in the supplementary estimates will be discussed in the committee of supply, and that will permit of a discussion which I think will make it unnecessary to refer the matter to the industrial relations committee.

Mr. Barnett: A supplementary question. Would the minister not agree that some useful purpose might be served by giving members of the house the opportunity of studying in some detail the proposals as they will affect the administration and operation of the employment service throughout the country? In this manner we would have an appropriate opportunity of questioning the administrative officials as to how this will work out in its operation in various parts of the country.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, this is a point that I will be glad to consider. I believe that at present the actual details of such a transfer have not been fully worked out, and indeed cannot be fully worked out until it is possible to give some legislative basis for this transfer. The details are being worked out at present.