

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

USE OF ALL-ESKIMO JURY—SIMILAR PRACTICE IN TRIALS OF INDIANS

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice. In view of the precedent recently set in the Northwest Territories concerning the appointment of an all-Eskimo jury in the trial of an Eskimo, so far as his authority allows him would the minister recommend a similar practice in cases of trials of people of Indian ancestry?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, a jury is selected according to the provisions of the Criminal Code.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

QUEBEC OBJECTIONS TO BILL—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT PRIOR TO COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour in connection with the unemployment insurance bill which has received second reading. In light of the fact the Minister of Labour of Quebec has indicated that he remains unwilling to accept some of the basic features of federal unemployment insurance, and since it is more than likely the minister held a meeting within the past week to discuss this matter, can he now advise if the objections which the provincial minister has taken in his emphatic stand have been cleared up, or is the standing committee of this House going to meet in a state of frustration, not knowing what that province or any other province wants?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sure the hon. member for Hamilton West will not mind my suggesting to him that the question he is asking deals with a matter which has been before the House and is now before a committee of the House. I would think that the question the hon. member has asked should better be resolved when the matter is before the committee or eventually when it is again before the House. Perhaps there may be an aspect of the matter which escapes me at the moment, but I would hope that the hon. member would not press the question.

Mr. Alexander: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, and with all due deference, the matter happens to be quite important to me, and I think to all those of us on this side of the House, in view of the fact we have been continually told by the Minister of Labour that if there have been any objections by the provinces, and particularly by the province of Quebec, those objections have been met. It seems to me that the minister must make a statement prior to the time the standing committee meets in order to prevent frustration on the part of hon. members and in order that we may know just what are the problems raised by Quebec in connection with the bill. I think the House is entitled to a statement by the minister on motions prior to the bill being considered by the committee.

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will allow the minister to reply briefly, but I still suggest to hon. members it is a basic rule of procedure that when a bill is before a standing committee of the House, or when a bill is under consideration in the House, no question should be asked about it during the question period. But I appreciate the point made by the hon. member, and the minister might be allowed to reply to it briefly.

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I am quite satisfied that the bill falls within the jurisdiction of the federal government. Now that we have adopted the principle of the bill on second reading I presume all members of the House will understand that it is a federal bill, not a provincial bill. I am not certain what philosophical differences may still exist between the Minister of Labour for the province of Quebec and myself, or for that matter with other provinces, but I am satisfied that the bill is structurally sound, does not violate the constitution, and is an important and progressive piece of social legislation.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The reply given by the minister indicates exactly the difficulty which underlies the allowing of questions about a bill which has been before the House and has been given second reading, indicating that there has been approval by the House of the principle of the bill. In my view, it is a reflection on the vote of the House to be asking questions now about the matter which to my recollection were discussed when the bill was before the House for second reading.

I suggest to hon. members it is entirely out of order at this time to be debating matters which have already been considered by the House, particularly when they ought to be discussed either in the committee or on third reading of the bill. It seems to me that the point made by the hon. member now might well be made on third reading.

Mr. Alexander: On a point of order and with all due respect, Sir, in light of the fact the minister has just indicated by implication that there are differences of opinion and—I stand to be corrected—that he intends to ignore those differences of opinion inasmuch as this is federal legislation, is he now going to ignore the demands and the objections of the province of Quebec? If so, then I would think it all the more important that a statement should be made by the minister as to what those objections are.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member that even if the minister wanted to make a statement now I would suggest to him that he would be out of order in making such a statement. I suggest to the hon. member that if we extend the question period by raising points of order we will not make much progress. The rules are made in such a way that when a member is not satisfied with a ruling made by the Chair on a question asked he has the right to suggest that the question be raised at the time of the adjournment. That is the recourse of the hon. member, not to raise the matter by way of a point of order.