

Supply—Labour

pledges made by the Liberal party during the last election campaign regarding the introduction of legislation to give farm labourers the benefit of the Unemployment Insurance Act.

I can assure the minister that in agricultural areas today there is a shortage of skilled farm labour. The situation is becoming more serious with every passing month. Perhaps the most important contributing factor is the fact that people with unemployment insurance books cannot secure stamps when they take employment on farms. I know this is an involved problem and I should like to see the government bring forward legislation to permit anyone with a book to be able to secure stamps if he takes a job on a farm. This, in itself, would not I believe create those abuses some people imagine might arise if the door were opened wide. It would be a step in the right direction and would be very beneficial, not only to those employing labour on the farms but also to those who wish to work on the farms.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): Before we go on, may I extend an appeal to the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough, the hon. member for Gloucester and the hon. member from Prince Edward Island, to assist—

The Chairman: Order, please; the hon. member can put forward his own views on the matter that is before the committee now, but I do not believe he can reflect on the views or the participation of other members in the committee.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): I speak to the point of order, sir. I do not understand how you knew what I was going to say because I did not say anything about the views of any member. I just happened to mention several members. You could check *Hansard* for a precedent and you will find that this has taken place previously when members on the other side have made this suggestion. I am only asking if they would stand with us on this side and impress upon the Minister of Labour the serious unemployment situation in the Atlantic provinces, and assist us in this manner?

Mr. Coates: It would appear the minister is either unwilling or unable, and I am going to assume he is unable, to provide this committee with the information as to policies this government has that will in any way correct the very serious problem of chronic unemployment in the Atlantic area. We have asked the minister to enunciate new

programs that have been initiated by this government in the past two years that have been specifically advantageous to the Atlantic area.

Now, I will agree that there have been extensions to existing programs that have been of some benefit. I certainly want to dissociate myself from the minister's statement that giving the Atlantic development board a fund of \$100 million has been of advantage to the Atlantic area, especially in view of the fact the \$100 million has almost disappeared. It would seem to me that it becomes more and more evident just how much of a disadvantage this action by the present government was. However, I will say that the extension from 50 per cent to 90 per cent on the payment of construction costs of the trans-Canada highway was a real advantage and will continue to be an advantage until that highway is completed in the Atlantic area.

What we are looking for, what we were led to believe in the Atlantic area by the present governments during the election campaign of April, 1963, was that there would be new policies of specific benefit to our area that would eliminate the high unemployment that has been with us for many years. This unemployment was attacked and reduced, and would have continued to be reduced if there had been no change of government. Indeed, let me say that would have been reduced at a far faster rate all over this nation than is presently the case, because of the policies of the former government, many of which are still in effect.

It would seem to me that while the Minister of Labour might have created a favourable image in this nation as a result of his performance in the House of Commons, he has been a complete failure so far as producing any new labour policies that have been of material assistance to the unemployed of this nation, especially in the Atlantic area. Certainly the present figure of 13 per cent unemployed in the Atlantic area is an indication of the justification for the statement that he has been a failure. If he has new policies ready on Monday that will be of benefit to the area, then I will be the first to congratulate him. They will be the first new policies that have been produced by this government that have any application to the Atlantic area.

The people of the Atlantic provinces were sold down the river by the pie-in-the-sky talk of members like the Minister of Labour during the election campaign of 1963. They have produced nothing but high sounding