

Supply—Labour

are dealing here not with the terms under which persons qualify for the payment of unemployment insurance out of the fund: we are dealing with an item which pertains simply to the cost of administration, an item for which the government bears the expense. This is very largely a matter of additional salaries required for the staff of the unemployment insurance commission. The hon. gentleman is raising a question pertaining to the persons who qualify for the payment of unemployment insurance out of the fund.

That is an entirely different matter. We have not that subject before us, and there will be proper opportunity during the course of this session to discuss the matter he is seeking to raise. The estimates of the Department of Labour for the next fiscal year will be before the house and there will be legislation to amend to Unemployment Insurance Act, as has been indicated already in the course of this discussion. My hon. friend will between those two pieces of business certainly have his opportunity to discuss this question. But, Mr. Chairman, the point has no bearing whatever on the matter of administration of the fund, which is a separate item and is handled under the law in a quite different way. The government bears the entire cost of administration, whereas payments out of the fund are dealt with in accordance with the terms of the legislation, and the fund is provided by contributions from three sources, of which the government is only one and, indeed, the smallest.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Chairman, I rise to complain once again of the replies we are receiving from the Minister of Finance. He has said and continues to say that there will be an opportunity before the end of this session for hon. members to put questions of this sort to the ministry, when replies will be given. He does not seek to strengthen his position by arguing that under this item this question could not properly be put. He simply says there will be ample opportunity later on for replies to be given to these questions.

The real difficulty which confronts us arises out of the fact that the minister persists in making replies for all departments, himself. If he had acceded to our suggestion last night, a suggestion which he himself put forward so frequently and vigorously when he was sitting on this side, namely that this practice of the Minister of Finance should not be pursued, he would not be in the present difficulty.

The fact is that the answer to the question put by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate is not within my hon. friend's

[Mr. Fleming (Eglinton).]

knowledge. Therefore he is obliged to give the answer he has just given. My hon. friend ought to bring the Minister of Labour now into the house, if he is available, to make a reply. We are now shortly going to recess. Hon. members are going back to their constituencies. We will not be back here for a couple of weeks. This is a matter of great moment and consequence to the fishermen of Newfoundland, as the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate has pointed out. And what reply is given to us? We are told "Oh, put your questions some other time; we will give you an answer when we bring in amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act."

Mr. Chairman, these amendments may not come in until the dying days of the session, yet this is a subject which was raised by an hon. member of this committee in a letter to the Prime Minister; and the Prime Minister, in replying to that question, said the matter was receiving consideration. This is the subject with regard to which the Minister of Finance now tells us "Put your questions at some other time."

The hon. member is putting the question now, and he is entitled to receive from the government an answer to the question. If the Minister of Finance cannot answer the question himself he ought to ask his colleagues, some of whom are in this chamber and anxious to make replies. When we come to deal with the estimates of the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, I know the minister of northern affairs is going to ask the Minister of Finance to allow him to make replies, as the Minister of Agriculture did last night by implication and by glances, appealing to the Minister of Finance to allow him to reply to the questions asked. And I know that the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys, the genial minister who looks at me now is not going to be happy if the reply on behalf of that department is given by my beloved and ubiquitous friend the Minister of Finance.

The trouble in which the hon. gentleman finds himself in dealing with all these estimates is an obvious one: he is seeking to reply on behalf of each minister, and in consequence we have been getting unsatisfactory and inadequate answers to our questions, of which there is no better example than the reply which the minister gave to the impassioned and able speech made by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate.

Mr. Pickersgill: I do not entirely subscribe to everything which was said by my hon. friend from Essex East.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.