

Hon. MICHAEL STARR (*Minister of the Department of Labour*): Mr. Thomson, would you elaborate on the first aspect of the movement? You have just explained the movement of a worker from an area that has been declared, by order in council, as a labour surplus area.

Mr. THOMSON: The bulk of this item is taken up in the advancing of transportation to employees on behalf of employers.

Our clearance machinery is very much involved in this and I think perhaps I should take a few minutes to explain that.

If an employer gives us an order for an employee—he has a vacancy which cannot be filled locally—we will ask him, if we are unable to fill the order, if we can place this order in our clearance. This order will be placed first at the adjacent offices and then to other offices in the province, and finally to the all-Canada wide offices.

Very often the employer will ask us to advance the cost of transportation to the worker so that he can be moved. In such cases the employer, as I say, reimburses us for such an advance.

That operation accounts for the bulk of this item.

Mr. CARON: In a case such as you have explained the worker has to reimburse the Unemployment Insurance Commission for the cost of that move?

Mr. THOMSON: In most cases he does. The employer usually deducts it from his wages. There are certain occasions when an employer will pay the cost of the transportation.

Mr. HOUCK: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the minister who designates labour surplus areas?

Mr. STARR: The minister does so by order in council after it has been established that these areas have a good deal of unemployment and that there is no possibility of local industry absorbing these unemployed persons. When a person wishes to move and has a job in some other area but has no means of meeting the cost of his transportation from the labour surplus area, we pay all his expenses.

Mr. CARON: Has it been found rather easy to find employment in other parts of the country?

Mr. THOMSON: No, we have found this rather difficult.

Finding employment is easy in some cases where a large plant has closed down and all the employees are qualified and skilled. In that event we find it relatively easy to place them. In regard to unemployed persons who are relatively unskilled it is difficult to find places to move them to.

We have moved the bulk of these people from New Glasgow and Springhill to other mining areas in the maritimes.

Mr. MACINNIS: Did the Dominion Coal Company come within this first category following the Springhill disaster?

Mr. THOMSON: The Dominion Coal Company came under the second category. There was a number of workers moved from Springhill to Sydney.

Mr. MACINNIS: This was not at the request of the company?

Mr. THOMSON: Oh, no. This happened as a result of requests from individuals at a cost to the dominion government rather than the company.

I would like to say in regard to the use of this money that it is not really an expenditure, it is actually a revolving expenditure. The money is advanced on behalf of an employer and repaid later, so it is not really an expenditure as it is in the case of the second illustration I gave.

Mr. BEECH: I hear farmers complaining that they cannot get much help.