

Supply—Labour

it takes a week for a letter to come back and another week for a letter to reach the office, people get discouraged.

Sometimes these people go for months without the insurance payments to which they are entitled. They have to go on relief. They spend the relief money and when they finally get their insurance money the welfare organization wants repayment of the relief money. This creates all sorts of unnecessary social problems.

Mr. Starr: If I may interrupt, I think we can overcome some of the problems the hon. member has mentioned. As you know, we have appointed agents now who are sufficiently trained to carry out the function of filling out claims on behalf of people so that there is no delay involved in letters going back and forth through the mails. If the hon. member knows of areas in his riding where he thinks there should be an agent appointed I will be glad to do so if he will let me know.

Mr. Pickersgill: I am not going to take the time of the committee or the minister now. I will be very glad to talk about that privately. The minister will understand that I do not want to mention some places in my riding without mentioning them all. I promised the Minister of Public Works that I would not give the names of all the places in my riding this evening. That was a private undertaking but I intend to keep it. But there is one other point. While it is very useful and important to have claims offices, I have been very much interested in seeing the minister make provision for job officers who would travel around—

Mr. Starr: We established two new offices in your riding.

Mr. Pickersgill: I think the offices the minister established were for the purpose of dealing with claims, not for the purpose of providing jobs.

Mr. Starr: They have placement officers there.

Mr. Pickersgill: In my riding?

Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert): Why don't you take a trip down there and find out what is going on?

Mr. Pickersgill: If the hon. member for Saint John-Albert would like to come to my riding with me any time I would be very happy to take him around. He would soon find out that I am fairly well known in my riding, probably just as well known as he is in his.

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert): The hon. member said in the first election in which he ran that he was going to move into the riding and I notice that he has not established residence there yet.

Mr. Pickersgill: Well, sir, I do not know whether you will permit me to reply to the hon. gentleman but what he has stated is completely incorrect and I have tried to choose a word that is parliamentary. Whenever my constituents complain about my conduct I will be impressed but as long as the complaints come only from the hon. member for Saint John-Albert I will be impressed rather differently.

The Chairman: I believe we should discuss the labour estimates.

Mr. Pickersgill: I am labouring to get back to the point. My point is that I feel a more decentralized effort should be made in certain of the provinces in the field of placement as well. It seems to me that I should not take any more of the time of the committee.

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, I was very glad to hear the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate speak of this group's efforts to bring to the minister's attention the wisdom of permitting university students, those who can obtain technical training—

Mr. Pickersgill: And schoolboys too.

Mr. Herridge:—nurses and others who might attend business college to attend these institutions during the time they are drawing unemployment insurance if during that period they would otherwise be simply unemployed and idle. I agree with what the hon. member said. I think it is stupid and socially wasteful to allow our young people to waste their time when we can assist them to that limited extent without any additional expense to the exchequer.

I want to bring to the minister's attention again the question of covering defence personnel by bringing them under the Unemployment Insurance Act. I brought this matter up in the veterans affairs committee and found out that the high officials of the defence department made the decision. Personally I do not see why senior officials of the defence department should decide whether or not other ranks in the armed forces should come under unemployment insurance. I have a number of cases in mind of men who came out of the armed forces during the last 18 months and who have been unemployed for long periods because they have been out of contact with work in the area, out of contact with employers and so