

*Interim Supply*

the Minister of National Health and Welfare—which minister should be fighting for his people—said he would look into the lay-off situation there and see that it was alleviated. This was over a month ago. What is the matter with this government? Why are they not keeping this type of promise? It is not difficult to understand why they do not keep the promises they made prior to the election, but why is it that the Prime Minister should rise in the house one day, make a promise, and then not fulfil it.

The situation with regard to the winter works program is not the only fault I find with this government. I see the Associate Minister of National Defence sitting there sanctimoniously, giving the appearance that he is interested in the defence of this country. That minister has no interest in the defence of this country; he knows nothing about it. He has made up his mind, after having an interview with one person. He said he was in a dilemma. One person will not solve that for him. He had better get some other advice. It is not too long ago that I put a question to the minister in respect of government material that was found under the sea. I am speaking of a cable which was installed at the start of the war. Now, it is at least 26 or 27 years old, and was discovered by some scuba divers. Since they believed it was government property, they made some inquiries about its removal. They made further inquiries concerning whether it would be worth while to buy this material.

● (3:50 p.m.)

I put the proposition to the Minister of National Defence, and we discussed the matter. Lo and behold, I was instructed to ask the minister a question about this situation in the house. This was at the time the minister's executive assistant, Mr. Lee, was asking opposition members to give his minister an opportunity to answer questions in the house. I asked him the question but he could not come up with an answer. I was invited to ask this question and I did so, but His Honour, Mr. Speaker, ruled my question out of order. I was permitted to ask the question notwithstanding that ruling because I persuaded the Speaker that I had been asked to pose the question.

Finally, it came to light that the department would have to sell this material to the men who discovered it, in spite of the fact it had been lying under the ocean for 26 years and had been abandoned by the Department of

[Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South).]

National Defence during the period from 1945 to 1954.

The minister was apparently completely ignorant of the situation before I asked my question. I had contacted Crown Assets Disposal Corporation and was informed there was no record of this cable. It was not included in their inventory. Obviously, there was no question about the fact that the department had abandoned this material, yet the minister and his associate minister insisted this material had to be sold. This is a case of the government, being advised by the Minister of National Defence and the Associate Minister of National Defence, attempting to sell something to the citizens of Canada which they no longer owned, and which was not on their inventory.

I mention this particular incident as an indication of the fact that the minister should acquaint himself with situations before taking a stubborn position such as he is taking in respect of the unification program. In this regard, the minister said he had consulted an authority, and on the basis of the advice he received had made up his mind. He admitted that he was in a dilemma and I submit he is still in the same dilemma.

Let me say something now to the Minister of Public Works who is busy walking around this chamber. I should like to call his attention to the blackmail of which he apparently is the instigator. From the statement he made earlier, I believe I have interpreted rightly the intention of this government. The minister suggested that we begin sitting 24 hours a day, and placed a motion to that effect on the order paper. Let me assure him that I will accommodate him in this regard if he has guts enough to proceed with that motion. The motion to sit for 24 hours, according to the minister, was decided upon before this government found sufficient funds to pay civil servants' salaries.

**Mr. McIlraith:** That is correct; that is what the minister said and that is the fact.

**Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South):** I am glad the minister made that interjection. According to the Minister of National Revenue, this money was available for the payment of these salaries as the result of a legal opinion received on Thursday morning. Apparently at that time the government got the okay from the legal officers to utilize this money for this purpose. That being so, why does the minister not withdraw this motion which is in effect a form a blackmail? The