

Unemployment Conditions

how many persons (i) have had complaints laid against them or have been charged; (ii) have been found guilty?

3. What amounts have been recovered by the government in connection with each of these thefts?

POST OFFICE FLYING SQUADS, MONTREAL

Question No. 188—Mr. Denis:

1. Since July 1957, has the post office department organized, instituted or accepted one or more so-called flying squads of persons to work in Montreal on call, as additional employees?

2. If so: (a) what are the names of these persons? (b) by whom were they individually recommended? (c) did their names appear on the eligible list established by the civil service commission? (d) under what statute or regulation were the said persons employed?

LABOUR CONDITIONS

UNEMPLOYMENT—MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 26

Mr. H. J. Robichaud (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to move the adjournment of the house under standing order 26 for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely the grave unemployment situation in the country as revealed in government and press announcements made today, indicating that 504,000 Canadians were without jobs and seeking work on January 10 and that 755,387 Canadians were registered for employment in national employment service offices on January 14.

Mr. Speaker: Before accepting this motion, perhaps some hon. members might wish to indicate whether the question raised by the hon. member is such as to warrant the interruption of our proceedings under standing order 26 for the purpose of debating this subject matter.

Mr. Robichaud: If I might be allowed to say a few words on my motion—

Mr. Speaker: Before the hon. gentleman begins, may I direct his remarks to the urgency of debating this matter. That is really the issue which is before the house. It is accepted that the problem of unemployment is an important public issue, but the question of the urgency of debate is the one which requires consideration by the hon. member and by this house.

Mr. Diefenbaker: There are only two references which I intend to make—

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the Prime Minister would excuse me. I interrupted the hon. member who had the floor and I will hear what he has to say first.

Mr. Robichaud: My reason for moving the adjournment of the house has definitely to do with the urgency of debating the very

serious unemployment situation which exists throughout the country today, particularly in certain sections of the country including the Atlantic provinces. So little has been done—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Robichaud:—in order to relieve the situation that we feel an immediate debate should take place.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): The first comment I have to make is that according to the agreement as to the agenda for today, on the conclusion of the particular items referred to the house will then proceed to discuss the estimates of the Department of Labour. If, however, the matter should not come up for discussion today, then on Friday we shall resume the discussion of the Department of Labour estimates. Here and now, lest there be any doubt as to the views of the government in that connection, let me say that if hon. gentlemen wish to discuss unemployment in general an opportunity will be given when the estimates come up on Friday, under the item for the winter works program.

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Winch: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, having to do with the statement of the Prime Minister, he said that the first order of business today was supplementary estimates—

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Winch: There are motions to be dealt with before the orders of the day.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The hon. gentleman did not hear me. I said that after the conclusion of the items that are to be discussed we would go on with the estimates.

Mr. Winch: That is not today for sure.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the matter that has been raised is of the utmost importance, and that an immediate discussion is necessary. I am sorry the Liberals were so general in their reference to the subject. I had intended to move this type of motion pointing out the disastrous unemployment in certain areas such as Elliot Lake, Bancroft, Cape Breton, Pictou county, Nova Scotia, and British Columbia. From one coast to the other there are specific areas of unemployment, and I think there are good grounds for arguing that the situation should be discussed at this time.

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, Your Honour has invited the house, I believe, to indicate where there is urgency of debate, and that is what the Prime Minister addressed himself to a moment ago. I just