

*Unemployment Continuance Act*

Mr. POULIOT: Mr. Taschereau has set a very good example to the federal government by not reducing the salaries of the civil servants of Quebec, and he would not waste a lot of money in order to bring a man like Mr. Ferguson from England to give evidence at the expense of this country.

Mr. COTNAM: Oh, oh.

Mr. POULIOT: If you suffer from constipation of the brain so that you can only interrupt instead of making your own speeches I commend you to the Minister of Health, who may be able to recommend a laxative.

Hon. gentlemen occupying the treasury benches say they are working twenty hours a day. Why do they not work only eight hours a day and bring in some of the unemployed to assist them in the direction of the affairs of state?

As a matter of fact, however, the ministers are not working twenty hours a day; only one hon. gentleman says he works twenty hours a day, and I believe him. But, Mr. Chairman, he has to work twenty hours a day simply because he is unfair to the other ministers: he does not allow them to share his work. I am sure they would be ready to shoulder some of the hon. gentleman's responsibilities. The Postmaster General, for example, would no doubt be pleased to help the Minister of Labour and to relieve him of some of his burdens; so would the Minister of Public Works; so would the Minister of Marine; and so would the Minister of Finance, who has to hand over to him the money which is spent in the provinces. The Minister of Labour—I refer, of course, to the present minister's predecessor—was clever enough to manage matters in such a way as to have some freedom to do as he liked. May I read what he said to me in answer to a letter which I addressed to him on September 3, 1931:

It has accidentally come to my attention that this department has received from you personally eleven letters and one telegram, all within the last two days, with reference to unemployment works proposed in your riding.

It was extraordinary to that famous, excellent and efficient Minister of Labour, the present hon. gentleman's predecessor, that within the space of two days his department should receive eleven letters and one telegram from me, thus disturbing his peace of mind. He could not conceive that any man could write eleven letters and one telegram in two days. As I say, it was to him something extraordinary.

And I was forgetting my dear friend and old classmate, the hon. member for Dorchester

[Mr. Cotnam.]

(Mr. Gagnon), who sits just as quiet as any minister—as quiet as that other image the Minister of Labour. Is he the minister's adviser? Let the Minister of Labour speak. If he would speak, I am sure he would repeat the nice things my friend from Dorchester has said. And in the meantime may I express the hope that some day the Prime Minister will acknowledge the service given by my good friend from Dorchester by saying to him, "Here, Dorchester, I will have you sworn by His Excellency as one of my advisers." If he has not yet received word to that effect he is about to receive it, and I am sure he will do well in the cabinet, at any rate until he is stricken by that disease of dismissing poor people who have done him no harm. Meanwhile I wish him good luck.

I suggest to the Minister of Labour that, instead of writing hieroglyphics while we are speaking, he should listen to the advice that is given him, at least the advice of the hon. member for Dorchester. It would be beneficial to him. He has been writing on the same piece of paper for ten minutes; I should not be surprised if he found it extraordinary that anyone could write eleven letters and one telegram in two days. Business efficiency and practical methods—that is something he cannot understand. But that is not all; the Solicitor General's advice has not been taken; it has been regarded as so essential to the government that it has been entirely dispensed with ever since the beginning of the session.

Let me point out something else, Mr. Chairman. I have received a very bold and impolite letter from a man in the civil service named Harry Hereford, Dominion director of unemployment. I must confess that I was surprised to get such a letter from a civil servant. I do not know whether he is Canadian-born or a naturalized citizen—in the latter case it may be, perhaps, that it is so much the better for him. But let me give this advice to all civil servants, whatever their salary may be or however great their self-importance. It is that they should be polite to members of parliament, regardless of politics or anything else. When I recommend someone to the Department of Labour I do so not on political grounds but because I am sure that the person whom I recommend is in need. That is the only consideration that actuates me. When, therefore, I consider it my duty to recommend anyone to the civil servant in charge, I expect him to be civil. When I submitted to this man, Hereford, certain requests that I had received from the municipalities in my constituency, I was merely discharging my duty as a mem-