

*Unemployment Insurance Act*

other side who have taken part in this debate, have accused us of filibustering the passing of this bill.

**Mr. Grafftey:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Robichaud:** "Hear, hear". Those remarks just made by the hon. member for Cape Breton South are—

**Mr. MacInnis:** On a question of privilege, Mr. Chairman, I never made such remarks at all.

**Mr. Robichaud:** I refer to the words of the hon. member who accused us of filibustering the passing of this bill.

**Mr. MacInnis:** If the hon. member refers to the remark "hear, hear", I said I had not made such a remark.

**Mr. Robichaud:** I think the hon. member has already forgotten the remarks he made a few moments ago, and the same remarks were made on Tuesday by the hon. member for St. Hyacinthe when he said the Liberals were preventing the passing of a bill which gave benefits to the unemployed of this country. Mr. Chairman, I do not see how a bill which will require the employers and employees in this country to participate to the extent of \$75 million or \$80 million a year, when the benefits will amount at the most to \$20 million or \$25 million, can be recognized as a bill which will benefit the employees of this country.

This bill has as its main purpose the replenishment of the fund of the unemployment insurance commission, a fund which has been depleted since this government took office. A few benefits are included, such as the extension from 36 to 52 weeks and the introduction of a new clause in which deductions from higher salaries are only a blind to cover up the main purpose of this bill. Instead of accusing us of filibustering, or preventing the passage of this bill, the hon. member for Cape Breton South might have served his own electors better by supporting our protests. I should not be surprised if he is aware of a telegram which has been sent to Ottawa. The Minister of Labour must have received one, and one was sent to the Leader of the Opposition, signed by the president of district 26 of the united mine workers of America.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** What is the date of that telegram?

**Mr. Robichaud:** It is dated June 16, and it reads:

About 200 men still without UIC benefits. Approximately 1300 more miners to be added to this for a period of at least one week after the 20 June. Request consideration be given either under the

[Mr. Robichaud.]

Unemployment Insurance Act or otherwise. Such an emergency necessitates immediate financial assistance.

I should like the Minister of Labour to tell us what is being done to help these mine workers.

**Mr. Starr:** They are going back to work next week.

**Mr. Robichaud:** They are going back to work, and when a certain number go back to work more will be out of work.

**An hon. Member:** You hope.

**Mr. Starr:** And you are holding up the bill which would give them benefits.

**An hon. Member:** Doom and gloom.

**Mr. Robichaud:** A release was recently made public showing the employment situation as of the month of May, 1959. The minister rejoices, as we all do, that there was a reduction of over 110,000 in the number of persons who were without jobs as of May. The same report says under the heading of registration at national employment offices by regions shows a figure of 585,489, and a note at the bottom of page 2 of this release reads as follows:

Statistics of registrations at national employment offices are derived from a count of the applications on hand in every office at close of business on a specified date. The count includes registrations from persons known to have a job and applying for another one.

In other words, it is a fact that in this country today there are over 585,000 persons without jobs or seeking jobs. In my own constituency of Gloucester I challenge the minister to show that there are not at least 1,000 persons who are without jobs, who are not receiving unemployment insurance benefits and who are not registered for jobs. In other words, there is in this country today a very large number of persons seeking work who are not registered at unemployment insurance offices because they know they do not have sufficient contributions to make them eligible to receive benefits.

If the government was sincere and wanted to help the unemployed by amending the Unemployment Insurance Act in view of the lack of work which exists in this country today, the minimum requirement for unemployment insurance benefits, and particularly for seasonal benefits, should have been reduced from the present minimum of 15 weeks. There are in my constituency many workers who cannot obtain 15 weeks of employment during the summer months to qualify them to receive unemployment benefits during the winter months, and if the government had