

*Supply—Labour*

displaced workers. I hope that he and the department will give my recommendations serious consideration and I would be pleased if they would implement some of my recommendations in whole or in part.

I should like to sound a warning at this time with reference to mechanization in the unemployment insurance commission. Machines that will streamline the operation and make it more efficient are desirable but machines and procedures that treat people as statistics are undesirable. I know that the minister is in general agreement with this philosophy but I just want to call his attention to the very grave danger of treating unemployed people simply as units in an unemployed labour force.

I do not have personal knowledge of how these procedures work but I urge him when he considers the merits of the experiment and the possibility of extending it to other regions to take into consideration the effect it has on the relationships between people, the unemployed on one hand and those members of the commission who are trying to serve and look after them on the other. I urge the minister to bear this in mind. I know he will because I am convinced that he is just as interested as we are in this matter.

**Mr. Starr:** Mr. Chairman, I wish to assure the hon. member for Trinity that I have this philosophy foremost in my mind. The mechanization of which I spoke of relates to the processing of claims only and certainly there will be no mechanization in terms of placing people in jobs or interviewing them.

*(Translation):*

**Mr. Racine:** Mr. Chairman, while we are discussing the Minister of Labour's estimates I shall avail myself of this opportunity to draw the minister's attention on the hardship suffered by loggers and bushworkers following a notice published by the Unemployment Insurance Commission in December 1958, which reads as follows:

Notice to operators engaged in wood cutting and lumbering.

Revised divisor table.

As from January 4, 1959, section 143, as amended, of unemployment insurance regulations will put into force a revised table of quantitative divisors used in establishing the number of unemployment insurance contributions to be credited to workers engaged in wood cutting and lumbering, whose rate of pay is based on their production figures rather than on the time spent on such production. The revision of the said table took into consideration more general use of mechanical saws, which resulted in a higher weekly production per man than in the past.

[Mr. Hellyer.]

The notice also provides that, in future, wood cutters must cut 12 cords instead of 8. The proposed amendment therefore requires that lumberers increase their production by 50 per cent.

Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that if, on the one hand, account was taken of mechanization, the fact was overlooked, on the other hand, that forestry operations, in Quebec, are mostly a winter activity, and that it is rather difficult for a lumberer to work a six-day week. Often, as a result of bad or changeable weather, they have to be content with four days' work. It is therefore quite impossible for them to cut 12 cords a week under such conditions.

It seems to me that if account was taken of mechanization, in determining the number of cords which a bushworker may cut, account should also be taken of bad weather, so as to extend to those workers the same privilege that is extended workers in private industries, that is to say the right to obtain a stamp without having to work a full week. I therefore ask the Minister of Labour (Mr. Starr) to take up this matter with commission officials for their consideration so that they may be in a position, if possible, to show greater fairness towards lumberers.

Mr. Chairman, I should like to direct another question to the minister. Could he tell me whether the negotiations undertaken with the authorities of the State of Maine and New Hampshire are being continued, so as to enable Canadian forestry workers employed in those states to qualify for unemployment insurance, through an agreement similar to the agreement reached with the authorities of the state of New York? Could the minister indicate whether it is possible to reach such agreements with the states concerned?

If not, would it be possible to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act in order that these workers could qualify for benefits? We know that many of them would rather work in Canada—thus increasing the number of those who are seeking jobs—than go to the United States to work, because they cannot have the coverage of unemployment insurance. Therefore, I ask the minister to tell us if the negotiations with the two states concerned are still going on.

*(Text):*

**Mr. Starr:** Mr. Chairman, I thank the hon. member for his suggestion which I shall take under consideration. For the past year and a half I have been endeavouring by communication to arouse an interest on the part of the states of Maine and New Hampshire