

Supply—Labour

ask my hon. friend to wait for the announcement of those measures in due course. We are here dealing, Mr. Chairman, with the amount required to provide for the administration of this fund to March 31. My friend is asking me for a statement on future policy as applied to the next succeeding fiscal year or years. I must confine myself to the matter that is before the house and, Mr. Chairman, there is not a cent in this item that has any bearing whatever on the size of the fund.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Will the Minister of Finance tell me where I can get the figures on the fund with reference to expenditures made since January 15, 1959?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Well, I presume from time to time such information will be available. My hon. friend has been at this long enough to know you cannot just have the figures issued immediately, and the unemployment insurance commission publishes these figures as they become available.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): My hon. friend said month by month.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): As they become available.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): He said every month.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I referred to the *Labour Gazette*, but there are other publications as well. My hon. friend is aware of that.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I simply want to leave this matter by saying it is important and serious. I regret that the Minister of Finance cannot satisfy us as to the present state of the fund. This is a matter that is engaging the interest of many people in this country at this time, and the reply made by the minister will certainly not be very heartening.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I have a figure at the end of January, 15 days later than the period mentioned by my hon. friend. The sum standing to the credit of the fund, as I am informed, at January 31, 1959 was \$586,990,000.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): So my fears are right.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Your fears are never right.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Oh, yes, they are.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): The Martin bureau of statistics again!

Mr. Robichaud: The minister has just stated that a large part of this appropriation will be

used to pay salaries and wages under the unemployment insurance commission. In fact, on page 19 it is shown that \$1,762,000 will be used for salaries and wages. Can the minister tell us whether part of this money will also be used to pay salaries or commissions of special agents who have been appointed recently by the unemployment insurance commission? In fact 46 agents were appointed, 23 of whom were recommended by the local office managers, 22 by the Minister of Labour and one by a local postmaster. Can the minister tell us what part of this item will be used to pay the salary or commission of these agents?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I am not aware of the persons to whom my hon. friend refers. However, I point out to him that this item is for the payment of those persons in the civil service who are employees of the unemployment insurance commission. As to the persons referred to by my hon. friend, I have not heard of them. If he will give me more information about them I shall be glad to obtain that information and send it to him.

Mr. Robichaud: I think the minister will find—I have not the date here but I think it was February 27—that in a reply to a question which I addressed to the Minister of Labour the house was informed that 46 agents had been appointed under the unemployment insurance commission. The commission must require funds in order to pay these agents. We want to find out whether they are going to be paid from part of this appropriation which we are being asked to vote today. I think we have the right to know what is the estimate of the department or of the commission for the payment of such agents.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I shall be glad to obtain that information for my hon. friend and convey it to him.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to allow this vote to pass without making one or two observations about what I believe to have been a failure of the government and a failure of the Minister of Labour—and I am very sorry that he is not here when I am saying this—to honour a commitment which was made to one class of persons who are covered by the unemployment insurance commission. I am not going to take the time of the committee to read the letter which I wrote to the Prime Minister on October 21, 1958 about the fishermen in Newfoundland, covered by unemployment insurance, whose plight was serious because of a complete failure of the fishery in many parts of the east coast last summer; and which plight in my letter I suggested could have been dealt with through the agency of the