

is not, as Mr. Crouse puts it, one of the most beautiful, but the most wonderful province, B.C., I was going to say that one of the reasons why the aquarium is so successful is that it is in a wonderful province in the most beautiful park in the nation on top of all that. But I wanted to make a comment on the matter raised by Mr. Keays, namely, payment to fishermen of assistance when they have had a tough year. It seems to me that this touches somewhat on the activities of the Department of Labour and the Unemployment Insurance Commission. It seems to me that the method used by the Unemployment Insurance Commission in determining eligibility for unemployment insurance benefits by fishermen is rather a ridiculous one, and should be altered, because it does not take into account the income of the fisherman himself. It only takes into account the number of weeks which he has spent in fishing. We know of instances of some fishermen who have had an exceptionally good year and have incomes up into the twelve or fifteen thousand dollar bracket who are eligible for and receive unemployment insurance benefits; but other fishermen whose income is much less—

Mr. ROBICHAUD: May I interrupt? Are you talking about the regular unemployment insurance benefits?

Mr. HOWARD: Yes. I am just trying to draw the comparison that this is a very unwise thing. And that other fishermen whose income over the year has been decidedly less than that, in some cases only a thousand or two thousand dollars, find themselves ineligible for assistance because they do not have a sufficient number of stamps, they do not meet the requirements. I just want to put this forward as being an unreasonable situation. I think it is something that came about simply because at the time a particular minister of fisheries desired to have some selling point to the fisherman during the course of some national event, at which he was not successful, I gather, so far as being returned to government is concerned.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure if he were here he would give you an argument, Mr. Howard.

Mr. HOWARD: No, he would not give me an argument; it has been admitted that this was part of the reason. But, in any event, the situation that exists is most ridiculous and I think that an alteration should come about. It is also part of the base upon which the special program that the Minister announced rests, namely, number of weeks of contribution. This is part of it. I only want to say that if in future an arrangement is made whereby assistance is provided to fishermen that at that time we have a different system of determining eligibility for unemployment insurance, one which rests on income. Then we would be far better off and so would the fishermen.

Mr. ROBICHAUD: Mr. Chairman, I think that Mr. Howard will be prepared to admit that in the measure of special assistance we combine both. We corrected part of the discrimination which might have existed there, because even if the fishermen had ten, fifteen or twenty stamps if he was not getting a minimum, we gave him the difference. We corrected part of this discrimination.

Mr. HOWARD: Yes, you corrected it twice, as a matter of fact. You found out your first correction was too low.

Mr. ROBICHAUD: I am the first one to admit it.