

Supply—Labour

which I have brought up myself at different times—although the minister has always told the house he was taking it under consideration—concerns the Gill report which was presented some time ago. I am wondering why the government has not set up a committee to study this report. I do not approve of all of it, but there are some points in it which are worthy of consideration. In view of the high rate of unemployment in the country today every possible opportunity should be taken to reduce the figure and to help our unemployment offices across the country. I think the report has a few recommendations to make about the unemployment insurance fund, and if some of these had been put before us we might never have been faced with this situation tonight. At least, we would have passed these items before the Easter recess. Therefore I would urge the minister to consider the Gill report and to make sure he provides the necessary funds in the future, so if we do have an Easter recess we might take 10 days free of worry about whether or not the unemployment insurance fund is broke. The government should consider other possibilities which might present themselves, instead of bringing things in at the last moment. Although the members of my party are willing to sit here tonight because this matter requires discussion and clarification, it does not necessarily mean we will make a habit of it; I think everyone in our group is of that opinion. Nevertheless we are all expecting an explanation from the minister for this state of affairs today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ricard: I would not miss this opportunity of making some comments on the matter now before us. I think that on this matter I also speak on behalf of hon. members from the province of Quebec.

Once again it is our responsibility and the responsibility of parliament to come to the rescue of the government which manoeuvred itself in a deadlock.

I shall take only a few minutes, so that the government may get without further delay the assistance it needs so badly.

Mr. Chairman, it is in order to mention some things so that the Canadian people will be aware of what is happening in this House of Commons and of the stand taken by the government which is responsible for looking after the interests of the nation.

We have had similar situations in the past. And our friends opposite who were then in opposition could not find the proper words to qualify our lack of vision and good will in that matter.

I have before me some of the questions the present Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) asked when he was himself on this side of the house. I wish he were here tonight in order to recall some of the questions he then asked concerning the replenishing of the unemployment insurance fund.

In fact, when referring to *Hansard* of February 17, 1961, it is noted that the member for Essex East asked what step the government would take to replenish the unemployment insurance fund in order to comply with the vested interest of the eventual claimants under the Unemployment Insurance Act.

He asked a similar question as reported in *Hansard* of April 27, 1961. He again asked the same question on June 27, 1961, as reported on page 7111 of *Hansard*. On September 8, 1961, as reported on page 8108 of *Hansard* he asked a similar question. Finally, on January 31, 1962, once again as reported in *Hansard*, he asked the former minister of labour what he would do to replenish the unemployment insurance fund.

We have been led to believe by those who sit on treasury benches that they know the answers to all the problems, and as they claimed, there would be no more unemployment if they came into power.

In spite of the fine promises they made in order to assume power, there are still 500,000 unemployed in Canada, of whom 173,000 are in the province of Quebec.

No mention is made whatsoever by Liberal members from Quebec of measures that should be taken nor do we hear from them suggestions likely to help the minister to bring some relief to the unemployed anxious to work.

Mr. Chairman, I shall say no more, so as not to delay any further the business of the house and to prove that we, on this side of the house, are doing our utmost to help the present Minister of Labour to get out of the tight corner where he finds himself now.

I only wanted to remind the Secretary of State for External Affairs that when he was sitting on this side of the house, he was worrying much more about unemployment than he is at present.

If the members of the government would learn their lesson, if the fund deficiency would wake up the ministers into taking their responsibilities and the firm resolution to work more in the interests of the unemployed, I would be the first one to rejoice.

[*Text*]

Mr. MacInnis: I have only a few words to say on this particular matter. No one is more aware of the situation in Cape Breton than