

*Supply—Labour*

The reference is to the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act.

—is a provision in this act that requires an employer or employers to bargain collectively with a group of associated unions representing the employees and who are jointly acting through the medium of a properly constituted joint council, committee or division.

Railway workers are particularly interested in this request. They are interested because of experience they have had which has been both favourable and unfavourable. To a certain extent groups of unions are recognized by the railways as expressing themselves through one voice. In so far as that has been recognized voluntarily by the railways, it has been all to the good. But on the other hand the railway workers have also had the experience of the railway companies endeavouring to splinter off some of their smaller unions. I need not go into the details to illustrate the point. The minister knows that both of the statements I have made are correct.

There is some practice of this principle on a voluntary basis, but there are also instances where this principle is not practised. The railway workers are a bit apprehensive of what may happen when the present agreements expire. They feel that they are entitled to have their industry considered as a whole, and they feel very strongly that the request set out in the memorandum presented by the trades and labour congress should be given favourable consideration. It does seem to be a measure that calls for amendments to the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act. I ask the minister to give sympathetic and active consideration to this request.

Item agreed to.

## Annuities Act—

708. Administration—further amount required, \$50,000.

**Mr. Knowles:** This subject was up before, but at the time we were not actually on the Annuities Act item, so I thought I would hold my remarks until we reached this item in the supplementary estimates. I was glad to hear the minister say this morning that study is being given to possible amendments to the Annuities Act. I was particularly glad to hear him say something which sounded to me as though he realized the necessity for making provisions to enable people to mesh the provisions they make under the Annuities Act with our old age security legislation. I hope that the minister will pursue that study.

I am still remembering a promise that was made about three years ago to the effect that at a succeeding session we would have a special committee of the house to go into this whole question. I shall not press the minister

now for that committee, because he said this morning the government might be bringing in legislation to amend the act. If he does not bring in that legislation in the fall or during the session of 1952, I suggest a committee be set up to examine the possibility of making improvements in the act and in the administration. The minister knows that after we have talked on all other aspects of the matter, it still rankles in the minds of a great many Canadians that an injustice was done when, by order in council in 1948, the basic interest rate, on the basis of which annuities are paid, was reduced from four per cent to three per cent. I hope that in the studies of the problem the minister will not skirt around that question, but will give attention to the possibility of restoring the four per cent interest rate.

Item agreed to.

## Annuities Act—

710. Notwithstanding the Government Annuities Act, to authorize the Minister of Labour in consequence of the transfer of employees from the original employers to the new employers specified in the details of the estimates to enter into contracts with the original employers and the new employers, to provide that the new employers shall, effective on the dates respectively specified in the details become parties to group annuity contracts specified in the said details respectively in the place of the original employers with respect to employees to whom those contracts applied and who were transferred to the new employers and for the application of the contracts in respect of service with the original employers and the new employers and for such other terms as the minister deems necessary for the maintenance and continuity of pension rights of the employees under those contracts, and to provide for payments in the current and subsequent fiscal years in accordance with the contracts so entered into out of the government annuities account, \$1.

**Mr. Gregg:** I think the committee should have a word of explanation on the three items, 709, 710 and 711. They result from the fact we have not made the administrative amendments to the act. In each case these are things that should be done for the benefit of the annuitants. Our purpose cannot be accomplished other than in this manner until the amendments are brought in, when such dollar items will be unnecessary.

So far as the first item is concerned, it deals with a couple who applied for an annuity and paid their money to the agent. As hon. members know, thirty days after the issue of the contract the person buying the annuity can change his mind. This couple changed their mind and wrote to the agent giving him written proof to that effect. He was ill and did not receive the letter. Consequently, under the act, they could not get their money back. This item makes it possible.