

*Interim Supply*

on the consideration and the advice given by the unemployment insurance advisory board on the question of the regulations covering pay and gratuities which, I understand, have been reported upon?

The minister replied as follows:

The unemployment insurance commission have not advised me that they have received that report as yet.

Then, as usual in matters concerning labour, with his usual agility of mind and capacity the hon. member for Essex East intervened and said:

Since the meeting took place on March 4, notwithstanding a request that it should take place earlier, could the minister not ascertain by his own initiative whether or not the advisory committee has come to a conclusion?

Then the minister replied:

I expect that when the chairman and members of the committee have come to a conclusion and are prepared to make their report they will do so.

Then the hon. member for Vancouver East felt the urgency of this situation, as do all members of the opposition, and he said:

In view of the urgency of the matter could not the Minister of Labour make inquiries to ascertain whether or not a report has already been received?

The Minister of Labour replied:

I make inquiries on this matter each and every day, and what I said earlier is the information I receive.

My point in bringing this matter to the attention of the committee is that it is a serious matter to a very large number of working people in Canada. The unemployment insurance advisory board has dallied along with this since last October. It is not a question of spending large sums of money, so the government cannot hide behind financial reasons. It is simply an administrative problem which could be settled without a large expenditure of the taxpayers' money or any drain on the consolidated revenue fund or the unemployment insurance fund.

I am advised by hon. members behind me that the report was filed with the Minister of Labour about 10 days ago. The minister will tell me if that happens to be so.

**Mr. Starr:** I must say at once that is not true.

**Mr. Herridge:** Or with the unemployment insurance commission?

**Mr. Starr:** I am speaking about the same thing that the hon. member is.

**Mr. Herridge:** I apologize if I made an incorrect statement. Can the minister tell the house whether or not it was with the unemployment insurance commission 10 days ago?

**Mr. Starr:** No, it was not, and I checked on that just this morning.

**Mr. Herridge:** I thank the minister for his information. This matter is a serious one. Since last October there have been months of delay which, in the opinion of hon. members in the opposition, is causing an increasing number of unemployed persons some anxiety. We cannot see why there should be this delay in view of the fact, as I say, that the total expenditure involved is not great. It is our opinion and the opinion of many members that the present regulation is distinctly unfair and is against the principles of the Unemployment Insurance Act. We do urge the recognition of the validity of the complaints, and that a decision on this matter be made at the earliest possible date.

**Mr. Starr:** I should like to assure the hon. member that I am just as anxious to get this report as any hon. member is. I have been inquiring each and every day and urging them to get this report in.

**Mr. Winch:** May I ask the Minister of Labour, what was the final date of the meeting of the advisory committee?

**Mr. Starr:** The hon. member knows. He just repeated it. I think the meeting was on March 4.

**Mr. Winch:** You have not got the report yet?

**Mr. Starr:** There is no need for me to repeat. The report is going to be made to the unemployment insurance commission. I have been inquiring each and every day because of my anxiety to see this matter settled. They have not made a report yet.

**Mr. Herridge:** I am glad to hear the minister's reply in this connection. Would the minister inform the house as soon as the report is received?

**Mr. Starr:** I will.

**Mr. Howard:** Before the motion is put, there is a rather important matter I should like to draw to the attention of the committee, especially on the resolution for interim supply, in order that whatever corrective measures may be taken as a result can be taken before we deal with the main estimates. In the estimates of expenditures for this year there is an item of \$294,500 as a subsidy or subvention for steamship services on the west coast. The company which is operating that steamship service and in receipt of the subsidy is Northland Navigation Company. Last summer one of the unions, a certified union which had been in negotiations with that company, namely the national association of marine engineers, undertook to merge with another union, namely