

*Supply*

phase is carried out through the Quebec construction board bureau.

The pay schedule suggested by the Department of Employment and Immigration is the provincial minimum wage. For certain trades like carpenters and painters, communities cannot afford to pay construction bureau salaries. I therefore ask the minister whether he has entered into consultations with his Quebec counterpart to obtain building regulations exemptions for community development projects such as buildings and wharves, or as I said earlier, slips for fishermen's boats or community halls for Golden Age Clubs and farm-wives associations.

Certain local and regional initiatives that are very worthy cannot proceed in Quebec because of the salaries ordered by the construction bureau.

Another point I should like to make concerns the Unemployment Insurance Act. Under that act, the claimant must have made 20 contributions in the case of a first job to be entitled to benefits, or have worked 20 weeks if he returned to the work force and received no benefits during the last 52 weeks. I must say, Mr. Chairman, that in the Gaspé Peninsula and the maritimes, where the majority of jobs are of a seasonal nature, that 20-week entitlement period is too stringent. I would ask the minister whether he intends soon to introduce an amendment to the act, reducing the entitlement period from 20 weeks to 15. I will give the minister an opportunity to answer these few questions, and I will put another one later on.

[*English*]

**Mr. Axworthy:** Mr. Chairman, may I say in response to the hon. member's questions that, first of all, I understand well the problems faced in the Gaspé region with the board of trustees, because it is a region where it is difficult to provide a full range of services. The only difficulty up to now has been the relatively low workload. I can promise the hon. member that we are looking at it and we will attempt to provide some additional services to ensure that his constituents are properly looked after. By the way, I take some comfort in the comment of my colleague that in the beautiful area of Rimouski there is a woman commissioner and member already in place. We will follow her prime example.

● (1930)

On the question of changing the act itself respecting the re-entry phase, it is being examined as part of the review about which I spoke earlier. We hope to have the review ready for public discussion in the House within a few weeks after Christmas. At that time I know the hon. member will have a chance to look at our proposals to alter the manner in which re-entry weeks are allowed for members coming back into the work force.

Finally, on the question the member raised about the delay in payments, as he knows we suffered a serious slowdown as a result of the strike. We are attempting to catch up as well as we can. I will ask the regional director to make a report on the

member's region and get it to him by the next week to see how we can catch up. I believe within another two or three weeks we should be almost fully caught up, but I will ask for a report to assure the member that that is the case.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Cyr:** Mr. Chairman, I think I have another case to submit to the minister. In 1979, the Department of Employment and Immigration, in co-operation with the Secretary of State and the Quebec minister of communications authorized a project entitled "Resource groups for community media", more especially radio, and that project bears No. 001N-17-32. The program, according to a letter I received from the minister, was meant to be as follows. Its primary purpose was to increase employment opportunities for young unemployed. When I checked the names of the individuals who were hired, I realized that they are not young unemployed, but most of them are full-time station employees who were rehired under that program.

Mr. Chairman, I should like to suggest to the minister this evening that if he is to enter into new agreements with the Quebec government and community organizations in Quebec, he should formally instruct his officials to check and make sure that the standards of the program are complied with and that the personnel hired under that program are not full-time station or organization employees but young unemployed, as provided under the program.

[*English*]

**Mr. Axworthy:** Mr. Chairman, the hon. member's question is quite specific and detailed. I will have to look at it specifically, get an explanation and report back to him.

**Mr. Schellenberger:** Mr. Chairman, I came into the chamber just as the minister was answering some questions on the affirmative action programs in Alberta. Perhaps he will have to set me straight because I may not have heard everything, but I believe he said that in some way a bill before the Alberta government infringed upon native people taking advantage of some affirmative action programs.

As I understand the problem, it lies within the statutes of the province of Alberta, in the bill of rights. In the court cases which took place, the judges ruled that the statute of the province took precedence over the affirmative action programs in place. They quoted section 6 of the act which indicated that no employer or person acting on behalf of an employer shall refuse to employ or refuse to continue to employ any person or discriminate against any person with regard to employment or any term or condition of employment.

The province realized that there was a need for affirmative action particularly when it looked at the various large plants in the province, and the act that those plants were in areas where there were large unemployed groups of people such as native people on reserves, and the only way to do it was to pass another act in the legislature that affirmative action programs could take place in the cabinet signed the necessary docu-