

Supply—Labour

its responsibility to feed the hungry, to clothe those who are cold and provide shelter for those who may have to live in the open.

I believe that the minister is not facing his responsibilities when he refuses the proposals put to him by the members of the opposition. Let him bear the whole burden, the whole responsibility.

(Text):

Mr. Browne (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Chairman, we have heard some very impassioned appeals this afternoon, and pictures have been put before us of people whose benefits under unemployment insurance have expired and they are being thrown off the list. It is hard to realize that those appeals have come from an opposition which is doing everything it can to obstruct amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act which, among other things would extend the period of benefit from 36 to 52 weeks.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): On a point of order, the hon. gentleman has said that hon. members in this house are obstructing the passage of certain amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act. "Obstruct", of course, is an offensive word as you, Mr. Chairman, well know. What we have been doing is trying to provide greater justice to the workers and the employers of this country under the act. The suggestion made by so reasonable a member, one of the most reasonable in this house is, to put it mildly, a matter of the greatest regret, I hope that he will withdraw that at once and not require action by the Chair.

The Deputy Chairman: May I advise the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway that he cannot discuss a matter which is before a committee until that committee has reported to the house.

Mr. Browne (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Chairman, I would just remind the committee and all those who are complaining about the number of people whose benefits under unemployment insurance have expired, that they did in fact vote against this measure in principle in the house within the last few days, all except one member, the hon. member for Vancouver East.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, those who voted against the measure did not vote against unemployment insurance; they voted against a particular provision which they felt did not provide justice to certain groups in our country. They did not vote against unemployment insurance, particularly when it is realized that those in the Liberal opposition constitute the party which introduced unemployment insurance in this country.

Mr. Pallett: That is not correct.

Mr. Browne (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Chairman, to put the record straight as to who introduced unemployment insurance, I would like to remind the committee that the Conservative party introduced it long before the Liberal government ever did. If hon. members will look up the record they will find the answer. It was assented to on June 28, 1935, when the Conservative government of Rt. Hon. R. B. Bennett was in office. Furthermore, the first thing that the Liberal government did when it got into office was to try to get rid of it, and the way they did it was to have it taken to the Supreme Court of Canada where it was ruled ultra vires.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I rise on a point of order.

Some hon. Members: That is true.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The hon. gentleman said that the Liberal government caused the Supreme Court of Canada to rule it ultra vires.

Some hon. Members: He did not say that.

Mr. Ricard: He did not say that.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Under our constitution there are three arms of government, the legislature, the judiciary and the executive, each of which has separate functions. For one hon. member to say that a political party has interfered with the judicial process in this country is to cast a reflection on that body and is contrary to the rules of debate in this house.

Mr. Browne (Vancouver-Kingsway): The effect of their referring it there was to get rid of it. The same thing applies today in these extraneous arguments that they are giving to us. They have all kinds of reasons why they cannot vote in favour of it. They are opposed to it. They do not want to stop unemployment insurance but they do not want to extend the benefits. They do not want to increase the contributions. I think every fair-minded person in this country realizes that if we are to extend the benefits we shall have to increase the contributions to the fund.

The Deputy Chairman: I must remind the hon. member that this matter was before the house; it was voted on and disposed of.

Mr. Browne (Vancouver-Kingsway): It was before the house and it was voted on. That is what I am saying. Then, we hear all those bleatings from the opposition in this house about the people suffering because their benefits have expired.

Mr. Argue: I rise on a point of order. It is a well-known rule in this house that in a