

*Inquiries of the Ministry***UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

INQUIRY AS TO REPLENISHMENT OF FUND

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Paul Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to either the Acting Minister of Finance or the Minister of Labour. In view of the finding of the advisory committee of the unemployment insurance commission, tabled in this house yesterday, that the unemployment fund will be down to its last penny early in 1962, is the government now in a position to say what steps it proposes to take to replenish that fund so that the rights of workers under the unemployment insurance fund in Canada, particularly those who are unemployed, will not be prejudiced?

Hon. Michael Starr (Minister of Labour): I shall bring this question to the attention of the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that we have an Acting Minister of Finance—and I appreciate the circumstances under which he has assumed this responsibility, and in view of the long journey of the Minister of Finance—may I ask the acting minister whether he is in a position to make a statement with regard to a matter which is of such vital concern to thousands of workers in this country?

Hon. George C. Nowlan (Acting Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am in a position to give an assurance to the hon. member and to the house that this government as always will safeguard the rights of the workers and the citizens of this country.

(Translation):

COMMUNICATIONS

QUEBEC—REPORTED COMPLAINTS RESPECTING TELEPHONE SERVICE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. L. J. Pigeon (Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Transport.

Has the minister received any complaints from public authorities of L'Assomption, Repentigny, St. Charles, de Lachenaie, and even Joliette, regarding the shocking attitude of the Bell Telephone Company toward my constituents who are subject to discrimination?

Hon. Leon Balcer (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have actually received complaints to that effect. I have also received a lengthy correspondence from my hon. friend from Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm, and I have forwarded those documents to the board of transport commissioners.

[Mr. Nowlan.]

(Text):

REDUCTION IN TRANS-ATLANTIC TELEPHONE RATES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. R. C. Coates (Cumberland): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Transport. Can the minister inform the house whether the completion this autumn of the new trans-Atlantic telephone cable owned jointly by Canada and the United Kingdom will have any effect on trans-Atlantic telephone rates?

Hon. Leon Balcer (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the president of Canadian Overseas Telecommunication Corporation is today releasing to the press an announcement respecting a 25 per cent reduction in telephone rates from Canada to the United Kingdom which will come into effect on November 1, the expected date of the opening of the new trans-Atlantic multichannel, multi-purpose cable.

This reduction has been made possible owing to the successful operations of C.O.T.C. as well as anticipated lower operating costs of the new system, which will also provide the additional capacity necessary to carry the increased traffic which is expected to be generated as a result of lower charges.

I might add that for the time being this reduction is limited to calls to the United Kingdom, but discussions have been initiated with European countries with a view to including them in the area to be covered by lower rates.

FISHERIES

NEWFOUNDLAND—REQUEST BY FISHERMEN FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

On the orders of the day:

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Fisheries whether he has yet made any reply to the communication sent him by the Newfoundland federation of fishermen on August 24 and, if so, could he give the nature of the reply to the house or make it available to hon. members?

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Minister of Fisheries): Speaking from memory, Mr. Speaker, I am not certain of the identity of the communication to which the hon. member refers, but I will look into the matter and assure myself that we are referring to the same thing. My impression is that he is referring to a communication to which I have replied, but I will make certain of this point and reply further to his question.

Mr. Pickersgill: Perhaps I might assist the minister by pointing out to him that I was