

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not pretend that I can satisfy completely the legitimate interest and curiosity of my hon. friend. Perhaps I can do so in part at any rate by telling him that it will not be brought down this month.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**ROUYN, QUEBEC—ALLEGED DISQUALIFICATION OF UNEMPLOYED WORKERS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour. Could the minister comment on a statement by Mr. Emile Boudreau, representative of the United Steelworkers of America, reported in *La Frontiere* on February 18, that the unemployment insurance commission in Rouyn, Quebec is disqualifying unemployed workers from drawing unemployment insurance without grounds, thus forcing workers to accept work in the woods at substandard wages, sometimes lower than the unemployment insurance rate; and that the commission refuses to co-operate with the representatives of organized labour in the area even to the extent of refusing to give any information to union representatives who have interceded on behalf of the unemployed?

Hon. Michael Starr (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, this matter was brought to my attention in the early part of last week by the hon. member for Pontiac-Temiscamingue, and I received notice of this question from the hon. member for Assiniboia last Friday morning. However, I had already asked the commission to make a report on this matter.

They have reported to me on this situation as follows. Some 192 vacancies for bush-workers were received at the Rouyn local office of the unemployment insurance commission since November 25, 1959. The rate of pay offered was from \$6 to \$7.50 per cord, depending on cut, depth of snow, etc., which is the prevailing rate in the area. Of 650 persons referred, 580 failed to apply and disqualification has been imposed on some 125 claimants. Appeals have been made against disqualification in 18 cases, four of which have been heard by the board of referees. In three of these the insurance officer's decision was maintained. The remainder of the appeals will be heard in the next two weeks.

In so far as the second part of the question is concerned, I may say that co-operation with representatives of organized labour has at no time been refused. Information contained on one individual claimant's file has been denied, specifically in one case which is at present under investigation for suspected misrepresentation.

[Mr. Benidickson.]

Mr. Argue: I wonder if I might ask a supplementary question of the minister for clarification. Does the unemployment insurance commission make available information on the file of certain claimants to a union representative who intercedes with the claimant's written, signed approval?

Mr. Starr: That is right, sir. It has been the policy of the unemployment insurance commission to co-operate with labour unions in this respect, and in this instance permission was refused because of this charge of misrepresentation.

NATIONAL DEFENCE**LACROSSE MISSILE—INQUIRY AS TO FIRM ORDER FOLLOWING TESTS**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): I should like to ask the Minister of National Defence whether, in view of the fact that the tests for the Lacrosse missile seem to have been satisfactory, the government is now placing a firm order for this equipment. If so, will it be of a type to utilize nuclear warheads?

Hon. G. R. Pearkes (Minister of National Defence): We have not yet received a full analysis of the tests that were carried out at Churchill, so we are not at the present time in a position to make any firm recommendations or place a firm order.

FLOODS**MANITOBA—INQUIRY AS TO REQUEST TO MAKE CORRESPONDENCE PUBLIC**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillin-gate): I wonder whether the Prime Minister is now in a position to answer the question I asked on a couple of occasions last week, as to the consent of the government to the tabling of correspondence respecting flood control in the Red river valley?

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I understand the hon. gentleman has a motion on the order paper now for copies of the correspondence exchanged between the government of Canada and the government of Manitoba regarding the flood control program in the Red river valley. He already has that motion. The answer, however, to the first part of the question is that we have received a request; and to the second part of the question as to whether permission has been given, the answer is not yet.