

Supply—Labour

advisory committee being able to function at full strength at the present time, particularly in the face of representations which are now being made to a committee of this house and of discussions which have taken place in this house and which will take place later when the committee makes its report. It seems to us there should be no delay about either asking these gentlemen to return to their functions after withdrawing their resignations or, alternatively, re-establishing the full quota of labour representatives on the advisory committee. I think the minister owes this committee the fullest information he is able to give us.

Mr. Starr: For the information of the hon. member for Essex East, the unemployment advisory committee is composed of four representatives of the employees, four representatives of the employers, and a chairman. This committee meets once a year to consider the actuarial report to the unemployment insurance commission on the state of the fund, at which time they make a report to the governor in council. That report is tabled in the House of Commons as prescribed in the act.

As the hon. gentleman knows three of the workers' representatives resigned. However, the term for the whole committee expires on June 27 of this year, and with this in mind I have written letters to the four representative employers organizations asking for either the resubmission of the nominations of the present serving members or for new names for consideration. I have also written letters to the workers' organizations. I have written to the Canadian Labour Congress advising them of the fact that there are three vacancies and that the term expires on June 27 and asking them for the submission of names. I have also written to the Canadian Catholic federation of labour pointing out the same thing and asking for names. I have written, further, to the national legislative committee of the railway brotherhoods. In these letters I requested that names should be submitted to me by May 22, that is tomorrow. I have received word from the Canadian Labour Congress that Mr. Jodoin has been away on business, but he will be back tomorrow, so I expect names will be submitted to me for consideration.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The minister says the committee meets once a year. I think the act provides that it shall meet once a year, but he may recall that once, in 1958, it actually met on two occasions.

Mr. Starr: I can clarify that point. The committee does meet once a year, and I have set out the purpose for which it meets on

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

that occasion, but it may also meet at the request of the minister at any time the minister may wish to consider certain amendments to the act.

Mr. Pickersgill: And at the request of the commission.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Yes, as the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate points out it may also meet at the request of the commission. Can the minister say whether or not there have been any meetings of the advisory committee since the introduction of amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act?

Mr. Starr: There has been no meeting of the advisory committee since August 19, 1958.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Was there any consideration given to the request of the labour representatives who resigned, prior to their resignation, for the holding of a further meeting other than that held on August 19, 1958?

Mr. Starr: That was a matter for the decision of the chairman of that advisory committee.

Mr. Carter: Before this item carries I should like to take a few minutes in which to make some observations about unemployment insurance benefits for fishermen. Recently we have heard statements over the air by commentators, and we have read articles in the press, which have been phrased in such a way as to create in the public mind an impression that one of the big factors in the drain on the unemployment insurance fund has been the inclusion of fishermen within the scope of the Unemployment Insurance Act. I think that such statements require an answer. In reply to the hon. member for Kent (N.B.) the minister put on record some time ago—and I am referring to page 3146 of *Hansard*—that during the period between June 30, 1957 and March 31, 1959 payments out of the unemployment insurance fund amounted to \$782,794,595, while at the same time, contributions amounted to \$426,316,719. In other words, during that period the unemployment insurance fund paid out \$365.5 million more than it collected.

To mention this in the same breath as saying that benefits are now being received by fishermen is to convey a very wrong impression to the people of Canada. I do not know what the exact figures are—perhaps the minister could put them on record—but I do not think that the payments to fishermen amount to more than \$10 million