

Inquiries of the Ministry

[Later:]

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, I think I am in order at this time to point out that yesterday the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) asserted that if I wanted to find out about the alleged marriage of this Spalding woman I might ask the departmental counsel. I have asked the departmental counsel and he has never heard about any such marriage.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, the minister raises a question of privilege but I hope he has the information that his department retained counsel in Vancouver who lost the case in the supreme court and in the appeal court. They have been in touch with the solicitors for this lady and, as I am informed, are in possession of the facts. It was in that sense that I referred to the departmental counsel, the same counsel who wrote the letters to which I referred earlier today.

Mr. Pickersgill: May I say, also on a question of privilege, that if the lady's solicitors did not provide material information to the department that was of interest to her case, I think perhaps she ought to get some new solicitors.

Mr. Fleming: Or the government should get a new minister.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I rise on a question of privilege? I think that hon. members should remind themselves that a question of privilege is one that ought rarely to come up in parliament. It is depreciating what is meant by a question of privilege if, under the guise of a question of privilege, there occurs a debate at this juncture of our proceedings. I think that hon. members could pursue the point when the estimates of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration are before the house.

Mr. Fulton: Is a slur, not only on the name of the lady but on her solicitors, to be allowed—an entirely unwarranted slur? I submit that that sort of thing should not be allowed to happen. When the minister is guilty of that sort of conduct, it calls for a reply under the rules. The fact of the matter is that the marriage took place after the application was made—

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member contend that if a member, using his immunity in debate in this house, makes a slur on a company or person outside, someone must give him the rebuttal? If we were to have a question of privilege accepted for that purpose, we would have many in this house.

Mr. Fulton: I suggest to you, sir, that the minister should not abuse his immunity.

An hon. Member: Sit down.

COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

CONCURRENCE IN FIRST REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Mr. W. A. Tucker (Rosthern) presented the first report of the special committee on estimates, and moved that the report be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

REFERRAL OF BUSHWORKERS TO EMPLOYMENT IN LOGGING CAMPS

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Milton F. Gregg (Minister of Labour): A few days ago I stated in this house that I had asked the unemployment insurance commission to look into complaints concerning the referral of Quebec and New Brunswick bushworkers to employment in logging camps. This survey has now been carried out, and I have received a statement from the unemployment insurance commission, which I should like to summarize as follows.

Under the Unemployment Insurance Act the commission has an obligation to refer workers to suitable employment when such is available and, when no suitable employment is available, to pay benefits to those workers who are eligible. It also has an obligation to find suitable workers for employers.

The commission's offices in the provinces of Quebec and New Brunswick received orders for a substantial number of bushworkers and had a considerable number of unplaced applicants on their files who were qualified to fill the orders. Accordingly, these jobs were offered to those applicants. Where the employment was considered as appearing to be suitable, and when it was refused by an applicant who was a claimant, benefit was suspended pending decision by an insurance officer.

Adjudication by insurance officers is being made and suitability of the employment determined on the following bases:

(1) The rate of wages offered must be that prevailing in the area in which the employment is to be performed and not less than that offered by good employers in that area.

(2) When a job away from home is offered to a bushworker who is a claimant, the minimum duration of the employment must