

*Supply—Labour*

ter must realize that the program should be announced now while we are discussing his department's estimates. In view of past experience, and of the situation last winter when many municipalities, mostly in Quebec, were unable to take advantage of the winter works program—wholly inadequate as it was—and had to take the full blame, or at least 90 per cent of it, for this state of affairs, I think the government's plans should be disclosed earlier. I hope the minister can tell us, before we are through with his estimates, what the government is planning in this respect, so that municipalities can start their own planning. As the minister knows, it takes two or three months to complete field surveys and prepare plans and estimates, so if a start is to be made on this program in early December, municipalities should be put in a position where they can start planning for it immediately.

I hope the minister will not remain silent until we are through with his estimates, but rather will inform not only the house, but also interested municipalities, as to its intentions regarding this program for next winter.

(Text):

Item agreed to.

A—Department—

164. Economics and research branch, including research grants and related expenses, \$670,030.

**Mr. Howard:** This particular item concerns the economics and research branch. I wonder if the minister would indicate what are the activities of this branch. Could he tell us what researches the branch conducts, and could he give us some information about the research projects which have been conducted during the past year, together, if possible, with any plans the branch has for the future. With regard to grants—and I believe these amount to some \$7,000—could he tell us who receives these grants and for what purpose they are used.

**Mr. Starr:** Under the general authority of the Department of Labour Act the economics and research branch serves as a central federal agency for economic and social analysis and research in the labour field in carrying out research projects on labour problems including wages, hours and working conditions, union organizations, collective bargaining, employment and unemployment, professional and skilled manpower, occupations, the training of skilled manpower and other subjects in the labour field. The service is conducted in co-operation with employers, unions and research, statistical and other agencies within the government and outside.

The results of these activities are made available through regular and special reports which are widely distributed, and many

[Mr. Bourget.]

articles appear regularly in the *Labour Gazette*. This is the type of work which is carried on, and whenever any particular subject comes to our attention it is taken up by this department for study and a report.

These grants are paid to universities. Last year we paid out the following grants: University of Toronto, \$200; University of Alberta, \$1,000; University of British Columbia, \$1,200; an additional grant to the University of British Columbia, \$1,000; University of Ottawa, \$1,200 and McGill University, \$1,000. These relate to studies on labour arbitration, labour management and labour relations, union management, technological change and so on. These are the grants paid to the universities to carry out studies of this nature.

**Mr. Howard:** Professor Carrothers, a law professor of the University of British Columbia, has written a book concerning the use of court injunctions in labour disputes in the province of British Columbia and is presently working on an analysis of arbitration cases in that province. Would he be in receipt of any of these grants? Would he operate partially under a grant?

**Mr. Starr:** In 1953-54 we provided for the payment to Mr. Carrothers of \$900 to assist in the study of the use of labour injunctions and in 1954-55 the sum of \$300 was provided for this purpose.

**Mr. Howard:** I understand he is presently working on a similar study with respect to arbitration in labour disputes. Would he receive assistance in this respect?

**Mr. Starr:** Out of this \$7,000 there would be some assistance in that matter.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Mr. Chairman, under this item I presume would come the authorization for whatever researches are being undertaken in the department with regard to a modern problem that is of great concern, I am sure, to all of us, and that is the problem of automation. This question was referred to the other day by the Leader of the Opposition and earlier in some detail by the hon. member for Trinity.

It would be interesting to know to what extent the Department of Labour through its research division, which I am sure is an excellent one and I suspect comes under the direction of that very able economist, Mr. G. V. Haythorne, has been able to ascertain what conclusions have thus far been arrived at with regard to the effect of automation in Canada.

Our unemployment figures are serious as they have been for the past two years.