

*Supply—Labour*

Unemployment Insurance Act. I believe we are being very reasonable in asking for an answer to this question.

Having just returned from my home city of Vancouver I can say that this is the question my constituents expect me to direct to the Minister of Labour: How do they eat tomorrow and next week when no jobs are available and without receipt of unemployment insurance payments?

(Translation):

**Mr. Caron:** Mr. Chairman, the minister says: "We shall act in due course", yet everybody knows that "to govern is to foresee".

I fully agree with everything the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch) just said. Since additional benefits or payments have ceased, i.e. since May 15, the position has become serious not only in view of next fall, winter and spring, but even now. I realize that people will not die of hunger, because they will turn to the municipalities, but by that time municipalities will have to carry too much of a load for their means, as they did last year.

I have previously quoted some figures in this respect, and I am repeating them. In 1955 the city of Hull spent \$180,000 on public relief, part of which was paid by the provincial government and the rest by the municipality. Under this heading the budget of the city of Hull provides for the fiscal year 1959-60 an amount of \$588,000.

What is the department planning to do for the relief of municipalities? Did not the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) promise the municipalities before March 31, 1958 that he would help them, knowing that they lacked the taxation powers of the provincial and federal governments? Just now, when municipalities are really in need, we ask the government to act, and all it says is: "We shall do so in due course".

As the hon. member for Vancouver East said a moment ago, the time to do so is now. The unemployed are no longer getting insurance benefits and, as a result, municipalities and public relief agencies have to shoulder the whole burden. Could not the minister introduce at once some legislation which could at least help municipalities shoulder the burden that is crushing them because of the government's carelessness? Unemployment insurance benefits which have to be paid out are

[Mr. Winch.]

not the result of temporary unemployment, but of an economic recession for which municipal governments are not responsible.

Mr. Chairman, municipal governments cannot be held responsible for problems of international trade, nor for the decrease of foreign purchases in Canada, nor for the fact that our industrial reserves are so huge that our industries have to close down plants to avoid overloading their warehouses. Quite the contrary, the responsibility for all this lies with the central government, and that is why we are now urging them to open their eyes and see what is going on.

The hon. member for Vancouver East is back from visiting his constituency. He saw for himself what the situation was back there. It is the same situation as in this area and in neighbouring municipalities, yet the government—starting with the Minister of Labour—are closing their eyes so as not to see. That is what we are complaining about at the present time.

Mr. Chairman, a moment ago, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson) asked the Minister of Labour to postpone consideration of the first item of his departmental estimates, that we may have a chance to discuss those problems. What was the minister's answer? He replied: "We can't do that." And yet, it has been done in the past. On many occasions in the past, ministers have agreed to let the first item of their estimates stand, for later consideration. This procedure was also the current practice in the Quebec legislature when I used to be a member. As a matter of fact, the first item of the estimates of each department used to stand till the end of the session. However, it seems that we want to enforce a new kind of closure in this house by saying: "You have to adopt this or you will not get anything." Sir, we cannot agree to this new brand of closure from a government whose members have claimed that the rights of members of parliament should be respected and that the rights of the opposition are equal to those of the government side of the house.

Mr. Chairman, we find that all those rights are being denied members of the opposition. We have no right to request anything. We are always turned down. Mr. Chairman, I say that the government is wrong when it does not live up to its responsibility towards those who are suffering. As the hon. member for Vancouver East said earlier, it is not