

Supply—Labour

Canada and the legislatures of the various provinces, in so far as Canada's attitude is concerned.

With respect to the convention we ratified the other day regarding forced labour, or the abolition of forced labour, I would ask the minister whether it is a fact that because the Canadian parliament gave ratification to the abolition of forced labour convention the provinces are bound in so far as their jurisdiction is concerned? Does the fact that the federal parliament ratified a particular convention which cuts across the jurisdiction of the provinces in effect bind those provinces to that convention? What is going to happen if some action is taken?

The only answer I have received from the minister so far is that we shall cross that bridge when we come to it. I submit the minister should have crossed that bridge before, and should have had at least the common decency and courtesy to discuss it with the provinces, because he himself admitted that they do have jurisdiction in this matter. He should have discussed with them their opinions and their attitudes with respect to the abolition of forced labour.

I am quite sure he would have had no difficulty. I am quite sure there is not a province in Canada, Newfoundland included, that would have objected to the abolition of forced labour. The minister should have had the courtesy to do that. He did not. He has not yet said why he did not, but he does say it cuts across the jurisdiction of the provincial authorities and, in fact, invades their jurisdiction. It is either that, or it does not apply to them at all. It applies only to that section of labour, as it is classified, which comes under the jurisdiction of the parliament of Canada.

I wonder whether the minister can clarify this particular point, whether or not the ratification which the house gave the other day to the abolition of forced labour convention binds the provinces of this country to follow the same approach and not take any steps to promote forced labour but to continue its abolition.

The Chairman: Shall the resolution carry?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I should like to ask the minister a question. I saw an announcement the other day of the personnel of the employers' delegation to the next international labour conference, but I did not see at the time and I have not seen since anything with respect to whether or not the labour representatives had been announced, through either the minister or the Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs. Can the minister say anything about this? Per-

haps he could give us at the same time, if he is in a position to do so, the delegation as a whole.

Mr. Starr: Mr. Chairman, there are six employee delegates, six employer delegates and an equal number of government delegates, making 18 altogether. The government delegates are supplemented by two more who are operating in Europe at the present time. I am sorry that the officials have not the names of the employee delegates, but they have been designated and I understand they have left for the conference. I can procure their names for the hon. member.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): We should know at some time or other who are going to comprise the delegation.

Mr. Starr: They have left now. We have not the names handy at the moment, but we can supply them.

Mr. Caron: On the orders of the day I asked the minister whether he could table the minutes of a meeting of the unemployment insurance advisory committee. The minister answered me at the time and said there was a procedure set out in our daily routine proceedings for such questions. Well, the reason we had no time to place it on the order paper as a motion is that the industrial relations committee is sitting at the present time, and we are in need of all the information available to be in a position to discuss the matter which has been sent to that committee. Since we are sitting at six o'clock this evening we need the minutes at that time. I think it would be an easy matter for the minister to supply the minutes of the meeting of August 26, 1958. There is a lot of material in those minutes which would help the industrial relations committee to understand a little better the bills which have been sent to it.

As a matter of fact we have had a new report from the Department of Labour, bureau of statistics, indicating the number of unemployed in the country at the present time. We see and we rejoice in the fact that there was a reduction of 77,000 in the month of April as compared with last year. I think everybody in Canada will rejoice at that reduction. We know that 7.3 per cent of the labour force are still on the unemployed list, or were in the month of April. This is a very high figure, which must give us concern about the possibility of there being a very high rate of unemployment in Canada next winter.

This is one reason we would like the minister to bring before the house some legislation which will help not only to reduce slightly the number of unemployed, but also help those who will be receiving nothing.