

Unemployment Continuance Act

Mr. MACDOUGALL: I know I should not interrupt my hon. friend but I should like to ask what portion of the relief moneys in the province of Nova Scotia is expended on wharves and breakwaters such as he has suggested? I should like to ask this further question: Is it not true that 97 per cent of the foremen appointed by engineers in Halifax responsible for the construction of the breakwaters were appointed by a Liberal administration? Is that not so?

Mr. RALSTON: Mr. Chairman, shall we return to the question before us?

Mr. MACDOUGALL: I should like an answer.

Mr. RALSTON: I do not know how much money was spent on wharves and breakwaters. The minister may be able to tell my hon. friend. I should think that in the western end of Nova Scotia about \$50,000 has been spent on wharves and breakwaters.

Mr. MACDOUGALL: I want to tell my hon. friend that this government spent \$148,000 in the constituency represented by my hon. friend.

Mr. RALSTON: I have a return in my room. I am not going to bandy words with my hon. friend, but I assure him he is wrong. With regard to the appointment of federal engineers I must say I do not know whether any have been appointed lately or not.

Mr. BENNETT: They are appointed by the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. RALSTON: I do say that in our district the recommendations to the engineers are made by local committees. With that machinery we cannot get along very well, so far as the administration of these funds is concerned. My hon. friend the Minister of Labour should see that the situation is remedied.

Mr. GORDON: The situation which has been spread upon the record by the hon. member, if true or based upon facts, would of course raise great anxiety anywhere in Canada. It is strange, however, that the Department of Labour has never received a single complaint, even from the hon. member himself.

Mr. RALSTON: I am surprised at that statement. If the minister had ever read his files he would know something about it.

Mr. GORDON: I do know.

Mr. RALSTON: He knows nothing about it.

[Mr. Ralston.]

Mr. GORDON: You are in Montreal, and not in the Department of Labour.

Mr. RALSTON: My hon. friend will find a file of his own predecessor setting out specifically one instance, and adding that the instance described was but a sample. A further request was made that the then minister make an investigation.

Mr. GORDON: Instead of sending a sample why did you not send the substance?

Mr. RALSTON: My hon. friend has made one statement which has proven to be wrong. During the last day or two he has shown a lamentable lack of knowledge of the working of his department.

Mr. BENNETT: A very unfair statement.

Mr. RALSTON: He would have done better to have stayed in the house and listened to the discussion than to run around the corridors, as he has been doing.

Mr. STEVENS: Very small, cheap.

Mr. RALSTON: My hon. friend got up and made the statement that I had not made a single complaint, when the fact is that I had expressly stated before and repeat it today that I had made complaints. There are available about four letters which passed between the predecessor of the present minister and myself. Why does he take that stand? Simply out of ignorance, that is all—nothing else.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. STEVENS: Getting nasty again.

Mr. RALSTON: In view of the fact that complaints have been made, will the minister have investigations made? If he finds that my contentions are correct, will he take steps to correct the mistake and have selections made by some body capable of selecting men for these different works? I wait for the minister's answer.

Mr. GORDON: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member does not need to wait long. I have had something to do with the administration of the act, and for the past two years have worked in conjunction with many bodies throughout Canada. I am not going to suggest mistakes have not been made. Owing to the fact, however, that my hon. friend lives in the city of Montreal, far away from his riding, and his information is purely hearsay, I do not feel inclined to have investigations made.