

Adjournment Debate

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Before responding directly to the representation of the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) on behalf of his home province of Newfoundland, I personally, as parliamentary secretary, would like to take this, my first opportunity so far as he is concerned, to recognize his long standing interest in the department and his dedicated service as both a commanding officer and the militia adviser in his province.

I am sure the hon. member has had an opportunity to examine my response to the question put by his colleague from St. John's East concerning search and rescue capability. I do not intend, other than by reference to page 1215 of *Hansard* for February 12, 1973, to deal with that matter in detail. There is one point, however, that has been made many times before but does not appear to be clear in many members' minds, nor indeed in the public mind; that is, the actual responsibility of the department in terms of search and rescue.

The department, by cabinet direction, is responsible for providing search and rescue facilities capable of responding to air distress incidents in accordance with Canada's international responsibilities as agreed with the International Civil Aviation Association, and also in terms of our own domestic requirements. In addition, on behalf of the government the rescue co-ordination centres provide co-ordinating services for both air and marine incidents. This department does not receive a resource allocation, nor does it have the responsibility—I want to emphasize this—to deal with marine incidents. That is the responsibility of the Department of Transport. I know that the hon. member appreciates, however, that when there is a distress call, be it air or marine, the search and rescue facilities of the Canadian forces are immediately alerted and provide whatever assistance is possible.

• (2210)

The financial constraints under which the department has operated for the past few years has resulted in an over-all reduction in forces strength and also has necessitated consolidation of bases to achieve the most effective return for each defence dollar spent. I am sure that the hon. member would recognize that to reduce operating overheads it is more economic to provide centralized support services at five major bases in the Maritimes than to maintain a series of smaller, and hence more costly, bases in that area.

In terms of strategic considerations, the department does have the capability of performing both maritime and air surveillance in the Atlantic area to meet the primary defence role.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order, please.

[*Translation*]

MANPOWER—INQUIRY RESPECTING EFFICIENCY OF CENTRES

Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, on February 6, I asked the hon. Minister of Manpower and Immigration the following question:

[Mr. Marshall.]

In view of the fact that since the beginning of December a new regulation compels the unemployed to take personal steps to find work, could he tell us if in his opinion the application of this regulation will be enough to boost the economy . . .

Mr. Speaker, I asked that question because a new regulation enforced by the Unemployment Insurance Commission since last fall is causing problems to a great many unemployed. I would even say that this regulation is ridiculous in view of the present situation.

Speaking of only a few sectors of the labour market, I would mention first of all that of the footwear industry where the demand for labour is decreasing and employment is becoming seasonal. To my mind, it is absolutely senseless to force an old timer to find work elsewhere, when there is none available, and especially when he can be rehired by his former employer within a month or two.

Recently, several persons were denied unemployment insurance because they limited themselves to seeking employment with the manpower centres and the civil service. Mr. Speaker, if the workers have developed the habit of going to the manpower centres, it is because they have been trained or forced to do so.

For instance, when an unemployed person goes to the arsenal at Valcartier, the guard, at the gate, will tell him to go to a manpower centre because the arsenal does not hire people directly.

At the Quebec Department of Transportation a worker looking for a job on government ships goes through the same motions and gets the same answer.

At the Department of Public Works or the Department of the Postmaster General the unemployed cannot enter the building to apply for a job. The guard does not let them in but recommends that they see the public service or the manpower centre.

The same problem exists in the construction industry. An unemployed cannot move around the sites. A guard will tell him: see your union.

During the weekend I met a construction worker who, looking for a job had gone to the manpower centre. The receptionist did not even bother to refer him to a consultant. He was told: Friend, look up the billboard when you come in, that is all we have.

Lumberjacks are being forced to look for jobs which no longer exist.

In fact, any normal person knows that it is impossible for a five foot and a half lumberjack to move in six feet of snow. A lumberjack is not a mole, he is a human being.

If companies hired a lumberjack to work in six feet of snow with snow shoes he would violate the labour security legislation.

In addition to that, the provinces have their own statutes. Since there are regulations governing the height of stumps, a man cannot cut a tree at the height he wants but must do it according to the inspectors' instructions.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that six feet of snow are enough to upset the working methods of a lumberjack.

I know a jobless who went down to James Bay. He had left Quebec City by train and had done the last leg of his journey by plane. Upon his arrival he was told that the company was willing to hire him, since he is a heavy