

The second class comprises those of the older age group who perhaps have to pass permanently from the working population of the country. The same argument I have made with respect to the young girls applies to the older men and women who will be passing permanently out of the labour market. Perhaps they have an unbroken record of contributions to the unemployment insurance fund and in their old age they will need every help they can get. They will never receive any benefits from the unemployment insurance contributions which they have made.

I would say again to the minister that in this legislation he might see his way clear to giving this older age group of workers a nice retirement benefit.

Mr. STANLEY KNOWLES (Winnipeg North Centre): I rise to say just a few words with respect to this measure at this time. My colleagues the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. MacInnis) and the hon. member for Cape Breton South (Mr. Gillis) dealt with a number of the points in which I am interested, and I should like to support in particular the plea of the member for Vancouver East that the minister give further consideration to the question of enlarging the scope of the act to provide for sickness coverage, at least in the case of those who become ill while receiving unemployment insurance benefits. We can go into that matter again at a later time and I intend to do so. In fact, at some stage I intend to quote from the remarks of the present Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) when at the Liberal convention in 1919 he moved an important resolution which called for a number of things, some of which have not yet been put on the statute books, even though twenty-nine years have since gone by.

Tonight I wish to speak about two matters which I had hoped would be included in any measure the purpose of which is to enlarge the scope of the Unemployment Insurance Act. The two points which I desire to bring to the attention of the minister are those which the Winnipeg and district trades and labour council has come to the conclusion are the most important ones so far as the making of changes in the act itself is concerned.

First of all, there is this difficult question of suitable employment. We have had a number of discussions about it from time to time during the past few years when the administration of this act has been before us in the estimates, and I must confess that the minister can point out that there are provisions in the act which give the administration the authority to make the definitions of suitable employ-

ment which have caused the trouble. Because that authority is in the act, it seems to me that some change should have been made with respect to that matter at this time.

May I sum up the situation by reading a couple of quotations from a brief on the matter, prepared by the Winnipeg and district trades and labour council:

In the long run, it is more advantageous to let a person draw benefits a little longer, and put him into a job where he will be satisfied, where he will work to the best advantage; than it is to harry him, under penalty of losing benefits, into a job for which he is unsuited, and with which he will never be content.

Further on, there are a couple of short paragraphs which I should like to read. The first has reference to a number of cases that have already been cited in this brief where the suitability angle is referred to in relation to wages. I quote:

The cases here referred to concern only "suitability" with respect to wages. There are many other factors, such as distance from home, nature of work, domestic responsibilities and union agreements, all of which affect the suitability of employment.

It is the opinion of the Winnipeg and district trades and labour council that no pressure whatever should be placed on a man who is sincerely seeking employment, to compel him to accept work at a lower rate of pay than that to which he has been accustomed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but I must ask him to confine his remarks to the merits of the resolution which is before the house.

Mr. KNOWLES: May I call your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the resolution which we shall be asked to consider in committee? The resolution reads:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1940, to enlarge the scope of the act, to clarify certain provisions thereof . . .

And so on. As a matter of fact, I had concluded what I intended to say on the particular point that I was discussing—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. I do not wish to be disagreeable to the hon. member or to any other hon. member, but he will understand that I have a duty to perform and that is to keep the discussion relevant to the resolution before the house. That resolution is:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1940, to enlarge the scope of the act, to clarify certain provisions thereof, more specially in relation to contributions, procedure, offences and penalties, and to provide further for modification in the rates of contributions with the object of equalizing, to some extent, the total contributions payable by employers and employees.