

*Supply—Labour*

been suggested, shall we take on some other form of benefit, such as health benefits? What shall we do with this fund which has been built up, and which now stands so close to the billion dollar mark that there is practically no difference?

To my mind this is a very serious and important matter. And speaking of the size of the fund, and the fact that from year to year it increases in size, I would draw once again to the minister's attention the fact that when the benefits were increased a year or so ago, the supplementary benefits stayed at the same figure. I would urge upon the minister that he and his staff should consider seriously an increase in the amount of supplementary benefits, to bring them into line with the main benefits paid, because at the present time they are totally out of line.

Then another matter I would bring to the minister's attention in connection with unemployment insurance is regulation 5A (1), which I have mentioned on other occasions. In this connection it is well to keep in mind that the regulation has been altered twice, until at the present time it stands at a 60-day waiting period. This group of workers is the only group which is discriminated against in this manner.

I know all the reasons that are put forward by the staff of the unemployment insurance commission, and by the minister himself. I know all the excuses given for retaining this regulation on the statute books. But I say it is wrong. It is all wrong that any one group should have a special regulation levelled against it, when there are plenty of others who take every advantage they can of the provisions of the act.

As a matter of fact I could name two distinct groups of male workers who take advantage at every opportunity. I shall not mention them in particular but I know them, and I am sure the minister knows them. They take advantage of the benefits under the act at every opportunity. And I know one other group composed largely of women workers—but not necessarily married women—who in the last year in one industry put on a regular drive to take advantage of the provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act.

Yet there is this one regulation, 5(a) (i), which discriminates against this one class of workers, women who are in employment, who marry, and who remain in employment. So I say once again the time has long since passed when this regulation should be removed from the regulations set up under the Unemployment Insurance Act. Indeed, it should never have been there in the first

place. It is not even sensible; and it is a rank discrimination against one group of workers who, by and large, are observing the laws of this land just as well as and perhaps better than some of those who have not had discriminatory regulations placed against them in their employment.

There is one other matter I should like to discuss, and that is the responsibility for unemployed employables, to whom I have referred on other occasions. Two years ago I went into this matter at some length and quoted briefly from the Rowell-Sirois report, and also from the report of the dominion-provincial conference.

I think this evening I could not do better than quote briefly from the remarks of Hon. Mr. Goodfellow, when he was discussing the policy of his own department in the province of Ontario. During the discussion he dwelt at some length on the position of unemployed persons and, with your permission, Mr. Chairman, I should like to quote what he said. In part, these were his words:

At this time, I should like to state the policy of the government in the matter of meeting the cost of assistance to unemployed persons. In our opinion, the most thorough study of responsibility for unemployment assistance was that prepared by the Sirois royal commission. The two main points made in this report are as follows:

(1) Responsibility for the care of all unemployed employables rests with the federal government.

(2) Responsibility for the entire residue of persons requiring public assistance rests with the provincial governments and municipalities.

In stating that assistance to unemployed persons should be a dominion function the report held that the dominion should not only accept full financial responsibility but also full control of administration. It was stated that this would entail (1) the definition of employability by the dominion; (2) the administration of aid by the dominion; (3) the establishment of a national employment service; and (4) the establishment of compulsory unemployment insurance.

We are all aware that a national employment service has been established and that unemployment insurance is now in force. In principle, then, the government of Canada would appear to have acknowledged responsibility for the unemployed person by assisting him to locate suitable employment and by insuring him against the risks of unemployment. Yet, we all know that there are thousands of persons who are not covered by unemployment insurance and there are many who, through extended periods of unemployment, have exhausted their insurance benefits. At these particular points the government of Canada would seem to have withdrawn from the area of responsibility and to have left a most important part of the problem to be solved by the provinces and municipalities. This can hardly be viewed as a realistic approach.

We are in entire agreement with the recommendations of the Sirois report and today we are assuming our rightful responsibility for the unemployable person. We are convinced that responsibility for the care of all unemployed employables rests with the federal government both from financial and administrative points of view.