

*Supply—Labour*

**Mr. Lewis:** It is a very simple one. Did he say the S.U.B program was a Ford Program?

**Mr. MacGuigan:** I will take that question at the end of my remarks, Mr. Chairman. As I was saying, this is a contribution by the company of five cents for each hour of work by its employees. This is a benefit negotiated by the Ford workers in their collective agreement. At present the payment is something like 65 per cent of the weekly wage if the unemployment insurance benefits are added in, and on December 1 this will rise to something like 95 per cent of the weekly wage.

The T.A.B, or transitional assistance benefits program, is a federal government program, and comes into operation when the worker has been employed for 30 weeks in the automotive industry—not necessarily with the same corporation, provided he has been in the industry for that period of time. It pays something like 62 per cent to 75 per cent of the weekly wage, if the unemployment insurance benefits are included.

It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that several weaknesses have become apparent in the T.A.B program during the last few days. One of these is in the qualifying period, which is set at 30 weeks. In the case of these particular workmen, all of whom I believe were hired on August 19 or subsequent to that date, the longest period of service with the Ford Company is 14 weeks. They may have been employed previously in some other part of the automotive industry, and some of them may be eligible as a result of that, but a great many of them will not be eligible for the T.A.B grants.

These workers were not employed as part of any expansion in the Ford Motor Company. They were employed merely to replace those who had retired or gone on to other jobs. This was not an expansion program but merely the filling up of gaps that had developed among the work force.

I think the government ought to give some consideration to the payment of T.A.B benefits even when the qualifying period has been much less than 30 weeks, in a case where it is a question of replacing workers, rather than of expanding business, because it is clearly a consequence of the automobile pact. We are assured that in the long run there will be 300 more jobs available at Ford of Windsor, when the transition period has passed, but this is small comfort for the 338 workers now affected, all of whom may be laid off for 18 months during the transition period.

In addition, workers who are entitled to the S.U.B benefits are not entitled to the T.A.B benefits. In terms of the amount of money they receive this may not make that much difference, but in terms of the equities of the case there is a great deal to be said for making the T.A.B program apply all across the board, to all the workers who may be unemployed and who qualify under the minimum qualifications which, as I have already suggested, ought to be somewhat modified.

At present, if a motor company wishes, it may pay into the T.A.B fund, so that even workers who are covered by the S.U.B program may receive T.A.B benefits, but it is perhaps a little unrealistic to expect automobile companies to pay moneys into the T.A.B fund that they do not legally have to pay. As a result the worker's benefits under S.U.B which they have built up over the requisite amount of time with the corporation, are expended much sooner than they otherwise have to be. This was not the role that was intended for the S.U.B program when it was negotiated between the company and the union. The S.U.B program was intended to cover unemployment during periods of retooling and style changes. It was not to cover unemployment caused by technological changes in the industry resulting from the Canada-United States agreement.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I would draw the minister's attention to the fact that there appears to be a second gap in this program. It is to be hoped that some steps can be taken by the government in the weeks and months to come to fill up this gap by changing the regulations or, if necessary, by changing the statutes, or by renegotiating certain parts of the automobile agreement.

There are several other questions that ought to be raised. One is the question of notice. No one can seriously believe that a motor company as large as Ford of Canada decided just a week before Friday morning last that it was to make these gigantic changes. Indeed the very careful preparation of the publicity involved, which was largely focussed on the expansion in the future rather than on the short run disadvantages—the preparation of pictures and releases—indicates that the Ford Motor Company was aware, long in advance of the time that the program was announced, that it was about to take place.

If as much preparation had been lavished by the corporation upon preparing its workers and the public for what was to come, the