

Unemployment Insurance Act

effect for a year the fund will be even healthier than it is today. I base that opinion on the fact that, from the actuary's own calculations, there is every expectation of a net profit.

It must also be borne in mind that a new contribution class has been created which will yield 15 cents per insured person per week to the fund in excess of that collected formerly. Since a large proportion of the insured workers will fall into this class, the fund stands to benefit substantially.

I make that statement because of the figures which are provided in the *Canadian Statistical Review*. The last weekly supplement, dated June 7, shows the average earnings of persons in Canada. The industrial composite shows the average at \$60.80, which is quite a bit above the \$57 minimum of the top class, the new class which has been created. The manufacturing total is even above the general industrial composite. It stands at \$63.21. There are very few classes, Mr. Chairman, which fall below that \$57 figure. Therefore I think it bears out my contention that the majority of the industrial workers at least will fall into this top class for contribution. If we are not prepared to leave the maximum benefit period at the 51 weeks, which was in the former act, then we face the question of what is to happen to these 3.5 per cent of claimants who will be deprived of benefits at the end of 30 weeks.

I know there has been talk, and there probably will be more talk, about the seasonal benefits which will be available to them, benefits which were called supplementary benefits under the act. It is true that they may qualify for a few weeks' seasonal benefit commencing the following January, but that benefit was available, in part at least, under the old act even with the 51 weeks. For the purposes of considering their relative position they cannot be added to the 30-week period if they are not likewise added to the 51-week period for which they formerly qualified.

As I said at the beginning, I do not wish to prolong consideration of this bill but I do want to place on the record the plea which we make once more to the minister. We ask him to amend this section of the bill to permit maximum benefits of 51 weeks as formerly. We do not think that there is any real solid ground for refusal. If there is some ground of which we do not know then I think we can ask the minister what it is he fears. What eventuality does he fear will jeopardize the fund? Does he have in mind another period of large-scale unemployment? God forbid that that should happen. I hope

that before another winter rolls around we shall be in a much better position in this country than we have been for some time. If there is not that fear in the minister's mind, then I ask him once more to consider seriously amending the bill to provide for the former maximum benefit period of 51 weeks.

Mr. Gillis: Mr. Chairman, realizing that the minister must leave tonight for important duties overseas, and we wish him bon voyage, we know that if we are going to make a proper examination of the bill while the minister is here we cannot all make 40-minute speeches. We cannot have a proper examination of the bill after the minister has left because then the man with the answers will be gone. We in this group have agreed that one member who was on the committee would make a short statement at this time on clause 1 and would leave any argument we might have on the different sections of the bill to the time when the particular sections are being considered.

Mr. Churchill: Are you going to follow that practice in future in regard to other matters?

Mr. Gillis: We are going to follow that practice in order to accommodate the minister. As he has to leave we are going to help him. I am going to be as brief and explicit as possible.

This bill has been considered by the committee, which held some ten or eleven meetings, and in addition there were a number of meetings by the steering committee. The bill was examined thoroughly clause by clause. I submit that the arguments which were put forward in committee should not be put forward again in a general way. I attended all meetings of the committee and in my judgment every member of that committee received a thorough education in unemployment insurance. If the members saved the material they were able to gather during the course of the committee meetings they will have a most valuable file on unemployment insurance.

This is the first time since the inception of the act that it has had a complete revision. The act was opened up and reviewed. I know I learned a lot about unemployment insurance through being on the committee. We had the benefit of the presence of the chief commissioner and others from the unemployment insurance commission. I do not consider the briefs which they presented to the committee as being insulting or otherwise. I think those briefs reflected the experience of the commission during sixteen years' administration of the act. They