

*Unemployment Insurance Act*

resided in the place for twenty or twenty-five years. My question is this: is it a hard and fast rule that if suitable employment cannot be found for the applicant in the community in which he is domiciled he cannot secure unemployment insurance benefits if he refuses to move from that community?

Mr. MITCHELL: The answer is no.

Mr. FERGUSON: Does the minister mean to say that if a man resides in a certain community such as the town I come from, Collingwood, and there is no employment for able-bodied men in that town and there is a position offered him in some other part of Canada, that man can live at the expense of the taxpayer simply because there is no work for him in Collingwood?

Mr. MITCHELL: That is not what I said. I said there was no hard and fast rule. That was the implication I gave.

Mr. FERGUSON: Where does the discretion lie? Does it lie in the hands of the manager in that particular community?

Mr. MITCHELL: Discretion lies at the first level, and then there is an appeal to the court of referees and then to the umpire.

Mr. FERGUSON: I am sure that the gentleman who does not want work except in his bailiwick does not appeal to your board if your manager is generous with the taxpayers' money and gives the loafer unemployment insurance. Who has the say? Surely there must be some rule. I am astounded to find that a man may refuse work, remain at home and still draw unemployment insurance.

Mr. MITCHELL: I think I made that point earlier in the evening.

Mr. FERGUSON: I am not looking for votes.

Mr. MITCHELL: It is difficult to put in language what is suitable employment. What may be suitable employment for my hon. friend would not be suitable employment for me. Does the hon. member get my point? It may not be suitable employment for the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. That is the reason we have the checks and balances to regulate the administrative organization in the insurance offices. Then there is an appeal to the referee and, after that, to the umpire if necessary.

Mr. FERGUSON: What I am getting at is this. There is a regulation which says, "If suitable employment can be obtained." The man cannot simply say, "I will refuse to take it because I own my own home in this com-

munity," if there is no suitable work for him in his community. If there is work some place else in Canada, surely he cannot sit back and draw unemployment insurance.

Mr. MITCHELL: He can be told to go to the other place.

Mr. FERGUSON: If he does not go, you can then tell him to go where?

Mr. MITCHELL: Suppose you are the insurance officer or a member of the court of referees and a man comes to you who is unemployed. He may have a young family, and his wife may not be very well. I may be living in Collingwood and I may not want to go to Toronto to work—I do not know why I would not want to go there.

Mr. KNOWLES: You have lived in a lot of places tonight.

Mr. MITCHELL: In a case such as that, you have to use common sense and judgment. As I said earlier in the evening, the British who have had nearly forty years' experience with this legislation have not yet found language that will cover every case in point. It is pretty difficult to put it all down in English.

Mr. FERGUSON: They have ended up with a socialistic government in England.

Mr. HANSELL: The minister has been at bat all night and has been knocking out a few grounders.

Mr. BRYCE: Mostly foul balls.

Mr. HANSELL: He thinks it is just about time that he took his base. I should like to ask him a question with respect to part-time employment. I will give him a hypothetical case. A man is employed by several different companies or persons. He may be the janitor of a bank; he may be the fireman in some other building and he may be a janitor in a store. As I understand it, the first person for whom he works is the one who pays the employer's part of the insurance; but the hypothetical case is that the man does not have to work any particular hours in these particular cases. He may work for one person first for one day and for another person first the next day. I am told that there are cases where the three employers are paying their share of the unemployment insurance when only one employer should be paying it. Can the minister clarify that situation for us?

While I am on my feet, may I say that I have no serious criticism to make of the administration of the Unemployment Insurance Act. I have a constituency where unemployment insurance has to be administered carefully and properly, and I wish to say that

[Mr. Shaw.]