

*Unemployment Insurance Act*

many as the insurable employees; but as the work extends it is expected that, as I have already pointed out, the number of insurable employees will rise to 4,700, almost as many as those of the non-insurable employees. But, as I have already indicated, the government has been making strong representations through the Department of External Affairs to bring all the employees who are not at present insurable, that is those who are employed directly by the United States government, under the scope of the act. Therefore I hope, Mr. Chairman, very soon we shall find that all these 10,000 or 11,000 Newfoundland employees at the United States leased bases will be brought under the benefits of the Unemployment Insurance Act.

I merely wish to put these statements on *Hansard* in order to set the record straight, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Pearkes:** Mr. Chairman, I was not a member of the committee, but I have followed with interest the discussion that has taken place regarding the possibility of extending benefits to fishermen and to what the minister in the past has described as "near fishermen". I have spoken in this chamber on behalf of those employees of a company which carries out fishing operations in connection with the salmon traps at Sooke in British Columbia, known as the Sooke Harbour Fishing and Packing Company. Because I am not quite clear as to how far it has been decided to extend the coverage to these fringe fishermen, I was wondering whether the employees of that company will now be considered for coverage.

**Mr. Gregg:** Perhaps I can answer that question right now. The hon. member has said that I have referred to this small group on whose behalf he has made representations to the board for over a period of two years as "near fishermen". Perhaps the commission would prefer me not to say "near fishermen" but something a little farther away from fishermen than that. In any case, whatever they may be called, I can assure my hon. friend that the chief commissioner has assured me that that group will be brought under the act.

**Mr. Pearkes:** Thank you.

**Mr. McIvor:** Mr. Chairman, I have two things to say. First, I think unemployment insurance is in good hands, and I shall prove it. Before I do that I should like to say something about the appeal system. There are two things about the appeal system that I like very much. First of all, if an individual wishes to appeal from a decision of an insurance officer he can appeal to a board of

referees, which is made up of a chairman, a person representing labour and a person representing management. That is fair. If he is not satisfied with that he can send the decision to the board of referees. He can appeal to the umpire, who is a superior court judge. I know that this appeal system is fair because I had to appear before the court on behalf of a man whose name was neither Jones nor Smith. The umpire did not hold that as a handicap against him. He believed that we were sincere and he gave us credit for the facts that were placed before him, and we won our case. I think the case was dealt with fairly, and therefore I believe that unemployment insurance is in mighty fine hands and I am proud of them.

The other thing is that I think the office staffs in the offices in Fort William should be paid a little more. I know the Minister of Labour has a heart in him. He is very liberal, and he will take this case under consideration and see that these young men and young women will be paid a living wage.

**Mr. Deschatelets:** I am concerned with the report submitted by the international association of fire fighters who say that they should be excluded from the provision of this legislation as they were prior to January 1, 1954. If there exists any valid reason to exclude the police forces, then the fire fighters should be given the same treatment.

Under section 28 (1) the commission may make regulations to exclude, with the approval of the governor in council, any unemployment which would be similar in nature to employment of workers who are not insurable. Since the nature of the employment of both the police forces and fire fighters is surely similar, if not identical, I hope something will be done to correct this situation because both should be treated in the same way.

Before concluding my remarks on the first clause, may I be permitted to make a general remark following the thorough examination that was made in committee. It seems to me we are departing from the original purposes of this act which was primarily adopted, I understand, to protect classes of workers who from time to time are exposed by the nature of their employment to a reduction in staff owing to economic conditions.

After having heard the commissioners and the ministers—and their views are shared by the Canadian Congress of Labour—it appears now that we favour the extension of the coverage to as many classes of workers as possible. It might be the right course to follow, but I would hope that a clear policy will be adopted so that in the future

[Mr. Fraser (St. John's East).]