

Unemployment Insurance

However, the other resolutions that are on the order paper all had the same objective, to improve the situation of the workers.

If I had a wish to make for the unemployment insurance commission—and here I will conclude my remarks—I would like it to disappear because of a total lack of unemployment. In the meantime, I will make a point to support the motion of the hon. member for Beauce, whom I set as an example for all his colleagues in the opposition to follow.

Mr. Habel: Thank you.

Mr. Rene Letourneau (Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I take the opportunity to express my humble opinion on this resolution which was introduced by the hon. member for Beauce (Mr. Racine) who, like myself, represents a riding directly interested in the problem of woodsmen and bushworkers, as both our constituencies have many of those forest workers who are, every year, in great demand in the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and others. At this stage, Mr. Speaker, I must add that our workers are very much appreciated by our American neighbours who recognize their efficiency, their devotion to their work and their productivity. The American employers I meet always praise the honesty of our bushworkers and their devotion to their job. I firmly believe that these men should have the sympathy of the government, of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Starr), and of the unemployment insurance commission, who should all make an effort to solve their problem. This situation should be discussed with the authorities of the states concerned, so that these men might benefit from the same privileges as their fellow workers who are employed in the same industry, but in other American states. I also have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that by giving greater security to those men we would, in fact, increase the number of those looking for work in the lumber industry on the other side of the border. This would also contribute to lesser seasonal unemployment, as we must recognize that lumber operations are carried out in periods when other industries are slowing down, like the building industry, for instance, where this is due to the severe climate of our Canadian winter.

For all those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support the resolution proposed by the hon. member for Beauce, and I hope that the government will give serious consideration to a problem which should have been settled

by now. I am quite sure that because of the great qualities and the ability of the present Minister of Labour and of the authorities of the unemployment insurance commission, in co-operation with the authorities of the American states concerned, we may look forward, in the near future, to a fair result for the benefit of Canadian woodsmen.

Mr. J. J. Martel (Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, in taking part in the debate on the motion before the house, I do not intend, of course, to repeat all that was said this afternoon and tonight.

I simply want to make a few remarks on what, in my opinion, must be taken into consideration during the study of this motion.

Like the two members who spoke before me, and in particular the hon. member for Vaudreuil-Soulanges (Mr. Bourbonnais), I want to congratulate the mover of this resolution and thank him for giving us the opportunity to say a few words on this matter.

Like other members who spoke on this resolution, I also have in my constituency a problem which is of a particular interest to woodsmen, that is the bushworkers.

Of course, my constituency is not as close to the border as the one represented by the mover of this resolution, or other constituencies adjacent to the states of Maine or New Hampshire. But our bushworkers—and I should say our woodsmen in general—certainly deserve all the consideration the government can give their problems. That is why I feel it is my duty to say a few words on this resolution.

According to the information I could gather about unemployment insurance, to the effect that some steps should be taken to provide unemployment insurance benefits to Canadian bushworkers working in the state of Maine, as is the case for Canadian bushworkers working here in Canada, I gathered, this afternoon, during the several outlines given, that agreements had been concluded with certain states adjacent to Canada, but not with Maine and New Hampshire.

I feel the matter should be given fuller consideration.

However, as the hon. member for Restigouche-Madawaska (Mr. Van Horne) emphasized this afternoon, Canadian bushworkers working in Canada should be considered first.

He said that the matter had been discussed with the government of Maine on a few oc-