

Unemployment Insurance Act

country. I suggest this government has an opportunity now to reconsider its position and see whether or not it can take a new look at the situation and come forward with a proposition that would at least be consistent with the suggestion made by the advisory committee that the government contribution should be increased so that it will be at least half the total contribution of the workers and employees.

I submit these observations to the Minister of Finance. We have been light-hearted in some of our remarks only because we wanted to bring the Minister of Finance down from his pedestal of anger to a pedestal of phlegmatism, because we wanted him to understand fully how serious we are in the position we take and the serious reaction to this proposal that has come not only from labour groups but from employee groups all over this country. I ask the Minister of Finance to take a second look at this matter before imposing this burden on the workers of our country.

Mr. Starr: I am sure we are all touched by the continual reference by the hon. member for Essex East to his concern for the working people of this country. When one looks at the record that has been established by the hon. member for Essex East one begins to wonder whether there is a great deal of sincerity in what he says.

Let us take a look at what happened in 1950, when the hon. member for Essex East piloted an amendment to the Unemployment Insurance Act through the house to include seasonal workers. Prior to 1950 the weekly earnings had ranged from \$5.40 to \$7.49 in the lowest bracket, and from \$7.50 to \$9.59 in the second lowest bracket. In the first instance the employer paid 18 cents per week and in the second instance 24 cents per week. The worker, the employee for whom such a great deal of concern is exhibited by the hon. member for Essex East, contributed 12 cents in the first category and 15 cents in the second category.

To show his concern for the workers, this is what the hon. member did in 1950. He raised these two classes. He raised the contributions not of the employer, Mr. Chairman; the employer remained the same, at 18 cents, but what did he do with the workers? He raised the worker's contribution by 18 cents, making a total of 36 cents, or a total increase in the contribution by the working people of this country of 50 per cent. He left the employers alone. In the next two categories—

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Give us the pattern of change and the pattern of benefit; give the whole story.

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

Mr. Starr: If the hon. member will withhold his curiosity, I will do that. He knows the facts. Let us proceed. I will give the whole picture to show how deeply he is interested in the working people of this country.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): On a point of order, I do not mind argument.

Mr. Ricard: It begins to hurt.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): When the hon. member challenges my interest and sincerity in regard to labour—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Martin (Essex East):—he challenges something he cannot prove. I ask him to withdraw that imputation and to go on with his argument as he wishes, because I have a complete answer.

Mr. Starr: The hon. member for Essex East has argued that to put any increase upon the working people is not the proper thing to do.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): This is not what the argument was at all.

Mr. Starr: My point is that his argument in this respect is not borne out by what he did in 1950, when he put practically the whole burden of the increase on the working people of this country.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): That is not the fact.

Mr. Starr: I just gave the facts and you agreed with them. I pointed out that the increase on the people who earned the lowest salaries amounted to 50 per cent, and nothing additional was put on the employers. Let us take a look at the next two categories.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Shame on the member for Essex East!

Mr. Starr: Let us take the next two categories. In the category of people earning \$9.60 to \$11.99 a week the employer contributed 24 cents and the employee, the worker, contributed 18 cents. In the category of people earning \$12 to \$14.99 a week the employer contributed 24 cents and the employee 21 cents. What did the hon. member do? He raised the ceiling from \$9 to \$14.99. The employer was not touched; the employer still paid 24 cents. The people getting those low incomes had their contributions increased to 24 cents, an increase of 30 per cent.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): That is right.

Mr. Starr: There was his interest in the working people of this country. He saddled them with this increase.