

in no way offered in criticism of persons who may be on the unemployment insurance rolls at the present time.

There are only two other points I should like to mention. I thoroughly approve the establishment of the employment service under the arrangements the minister has described. I see this service has certain powers and duties in regard to the investigation of working conditions and opportunities for work, which will enable it better to carry out its functions. I want to offer one suggestion to the minister. The employment service, which of necessity will be closely concerned with examining employment opportunities in all parts of Canada, to my mind will have a great opportunity to assemble data and perhaps come to conclusions in regard to the improvement of working conditions in various parts of Canada. I refer particularly to the possibility of providing better housing accommodation and greater opportunities for the construction of houses in mining and logging camps which are far removed from towns and cities. It seems to me that good housing in our mining and logging camps, and indeed on farms and throughout the country, is a wonderful way of adding to good labour-management relations and to promote industrial peace instead of industrial unrest. The improvement of conditions in that respect, of course, would be a way of keeping up production, maintaining employment and relieving the burden on the employment service itself.

Suitable housing in these places, which when you come right down to it are the places where we produce our natural wealth, would kill two birds with one stone. It would enable men to be united with their families on the job and take them off the unemployment insurance rolls, because men are much more willing to travel to another place of employment if they are able to take their families with them; and moving a family out of a congested city area would free additional housing accommodation at that point, where housing accommodation is most critically short. So without going into it further I feel that this employment service could well work closely with the department responsible for housing in devising some amendment to the National Housing Act which would make funds more readily available for the construction of housing accommodation in these outlying places, thus contributing to the work of both the Department of Labour and the Department of Reconstruction.

The other matter about which I should like the minister to tell us something when he speaks is unemployment as related to the

[Mr. Merritt.]

Unemployment Insurance Act. According to the last word of the department, as at May 30 there were in Canada 210,000 people unemployed, while at the same time there were 115,000 opportunities for employment. In order that we may see the relationship of these figures to the unemployment insurance fund I hope the minister will be able to tell us how many are receiving unemployment insurance at the present time, and how many of them have been on the unemployment insurance rolls for more than three months.

That is about all I wish to say on the motion for second reading.

Mr. MITCHELL: Did the hon. member ask for the number of those in receipt of unemployment insurance for three months?

Mr. MERRITT: Yes. That period of three months, which I mentioned, was one chosen at random. Perhaps information for one, two and three months might be useful to hon. members.

Without making any pretence of having digested the bill in full, let me say in conclusion that I welcome the extension of the benefits to veterans and to those in the lumber industry. I hope the minister will not wait too long before bringing within the operation of this useful act some other classes in the community.

Mr. J. H. BLACKMORE (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, the measure before the house is worthy of commendation. There is one matter to which I would draw the minister's attention, and to which I believe he will have to give consideration as the years go by. In my view the principle of contributions on the part of employers and employees is not a sound principle upon which to enter the future. I suggest the minister should gradually and progressively eliminate contributions required from both employers and employees.

Employees' contributions decrease purchasing power among the people, which is exactly where we want the purchasing power to be. Contributions by employers tend to increase prices to consumers, which is exactly what we do not want, because it has a tendency toward inflation. Contributions by the government from moneys raised by taxation, the means by which money now being used for this purpose is obtained, also decreases purchasing power by taking it away from the people throughout the country, which is exactly where the purchasing power ought to be. It also tends to increase prices, which again is a means of producing inflation.

In his customary fashion the minister will be inclined to laugh off the suggestion that the government should make contributions,