

Unemployment Insurance Act

and the employers of this country so as to do a job which really belonged to the government in view of the economic situation which existed during the time since they took office. I do not think there has ever been a time in my experience when representations to a parliamentary committee from employers and employees contained such agreement that we had a bad bill, and yet the government has made no amendments whatsoever with respect to this bill—no compromise. I suggest the reason is this huge majority they have behind them; this feeling that might is right. I suggest to you that many members of this huge majority will be very embarrassed not only by management or employers but by employees perhaps not now but when the tax bills—and this in essence is a tax measure—come before them either three or six months hence.

The hon. member for Cape Breton South this morning referred to a certain element of labour and indicated that he felt confident that he was speaking for labour. I feel nobody can speak for labour. In my riding I would imagine that the largest element is comprised of people who work for wages. I have been endorsed from 1945 onward even in a tight Diefenbaker glamour election, although it was very tight indeed at that time. The wage earners, the people who carry the lunch pails and to whom a few cents here or there in terms of direct or indirect taxes represents an important consideration will wake up perhaps three months from now when they see that this clause involves an indirect tax, as was mentioned this morning by the hon. member for Welland.

Under this clause I believe we are obliged to review the rates and the statute that existed heretofore notwithstanding what the Minister of Finance said by reason of the fact that the position of the fund was perilous, not only because of the ordinary demands upon it but also because of the \$72 million of market value depletion obvious to the officials of the Minister of Labour when he saw fit to bring before us a revision in the rates of contribution.

I want to assert again that from June 1957 up to the time of the introduction of this bill the government chose to give candy and syrup to the people of this country suggesting to them that it did not have to be paid for. Nowhere is it more evident than in the indirect type of taxation that is exacted by this bill. In 1957 the government imposed upon the unemployment insurance fund, a fund that was contributed to by the working people of this country, certain additional benefits. The government went through the ensuing election saying that this was straight

candy not to be paid for. Today, however, we have the chickens coming home to roost.

Clause agreed to: Yeas, 47; nays, 23.

Clause 7 agreed to.

On clause 8—*Separate from estate in bankruptcy, etc.*

Mr. Starr: Mr. Chairman, clause 8 was deleted by a motion in committee but inadvertently the wording to renumber the subsequent clauses was left out. I would ask my colleague the Minister of Justice to move now to renumber the following clauses.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Chairman, I move:

That clause 9 be renumbered clause 8 and that the subsequent clauses be renumbered accordingly.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause agreed to.

On clause 9.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Chairman, this clause seeks to amend subsection 2 of section 45 of the act. I should like to know what the actuaries have been able to determine with respect to extra costs to the fund if the present 24-week period were reduced to a 20-week period, let us say? I am interested in knowing if any actuarial consideration has been given to the reduction of the 24-week period, what the new period would be and what extra cost would be involved.

Mr. Starr: Mr. Chairman, this was not up for consideration as an amendment and consequently the actuaries did not endeavour to establish a cost figure. There has not been a computation at all by the actuaries concerning the reduction of the number of weeks of contribution in order to qualify for benefits.

Mr. Howard: I know for a fact a number of requests have been made by organizations and people who are adversely affected by subsection 2 and who are not able to claim or receive benefits because of the seasonal nature of their employment. Representations have been made to the department of late and even before this government took office. I personally requested that the 24-week period be reduced and suggested a period of 20 weeks merely as a basis of discussion. Has any research been done along this line or have the minister, his department and his officials ignored what is a legitimate request on behalf of people who are adversely affected by this subsection?

Mr. Starr: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that a review was made some two years ago. Nothing has been done since. I think the hon. member refers to the fact that if a person