

*Unemployment Insurance*

alleviated by the uncertainty of charity, and yet for a period of years he has contributed. According to the figures I have received, to include those I have mentioned would not add more than a quarter of a million dollars to the expenditures under the act. To include them would be fair; it would be just; it would mean that these men who find themselves unemployed in consequence of illness and unable to work through no fault of their own would at least be assured of consideration.

I think too of the many employees in banks and other such institutions who are required to make their contributions and who under normal or even abnormal circumstances will never conceivably qualify for payment. I think that those who make payment of their contributions under classifications to which entitlement never, or seldom if ever, comes, should be placed in a category where for their contributions they would receive benefits for unemployment while unable to work for the statutory period.

I listened to the Minister of National Health and Welfare analysing the amendments to the act. It occurred to me that here was one provision that every hon. member in the house would support, and one that deserves the support of all of us who believe that those who contribute should have the opportunity of securing some benefit for the contribution that they make.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, it is not my purpose to take time to repeat the arguments already put forward in this debate. Rather I rise to contribute something which I feel has not yet been done. Before I do so I want to say that I support wholeheartedly the position taken by the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. MacInnis) and expressed by others who have taken part in this debate, namely, that the real issue facing this country and this parliament, and particularly this government, is the finding of ways and means to provide employment. What I shall say will, I think, highlight particularly the need for taking steps in that direction at the earliest possible date.

The job that I should like to do for a few moments is this. I should like to analyse in terms of dollars and cents, in terms of days and weeks, what it is that is being provided for our unemployed people by the measure that has been introduced by the Acting Minister of Labour (Mr. Martin).

The minister gave us certain figures. Naturally we have no printed document before us, but I took the notes down. He gave them quite clearly, and I think I have them down fairly well.

**Mr. Martin:** Would it not be better to wait?

**Mr. Knowles:** I think it should be done right away.

**Mr. Martin:** You have not the bill or anything before you.

**Mr. Knowles:** I have my own notes on the speech that the minister made; and in this parliamentary institution of ours one has always the hope that, by arguing on the resolution stage for things that ought to be in the bill, the government might reconsider and improve the bill before it introduces it.

I want to point out that the minister said that the supplementary benefits to be paid would amount to only 80 per cent of the normal benefits for which the unemployed person would otherwise qualify. Please note what that means. It means that an unemployed person who comes under the usual categories in the act, and who was earning \$35 a week, would normally qualify for benefits to the extent of \$18.30 a week. That is a man with one or more dependents. But under the supplementary provisions being brought in by the minister that person will be entitled to only \$14.64 per week by way of a so-called supplementary benefit.

**Mr. Martin:** You see, that shows the undesirability of drawing deductions without having the facts. The conclusion the hon. member has drawn with regard to the class to which he has referred is not accurate. When the bill is before the house I think the hon. member will see at once that, with regard to class one, what he has said is not so.

**Mr. Knowles:** I am talking about class eight.

**Mr. Martin:** There is no class eight.

**Mr. Knowles:** At the present time, according to the act as I have it, a person with a dependent paying 36 cents a week is in class seven and is entitled to a benefit of \$18.30 a week, if he meets the statutory conditions. The minister has said the new provision will provide 80 per cent of that; and 80 per cent of \$18.30 is \$14.64 a week.

Similarly a person, with dependents, earning \$30 a week will be entitled to a benefit to the extent of 80 per cent of \$15.60, which is only \$12.48 a week. Likewise a person whose income is \$25 a week, with a dependent or dependents, will be entitled to 80 per cent of \$12.90, which is only \$10.32 a week.

Mr. Speaker, relief rates in my city are better than that. I say again that to bring forward a measure like this at this critical time does only one thing: it underlines the