

Of this amount the employees will pay \$13,912,500; a similar amount will be paid by the employers, and the government will contribute \$5,560,000.

According to departmental records, the number of registered earners or employees under the Act is 2,750,000, but the *Labour Gazette* states the number is 3,594,000, which is 844,000 more than the departmental figure. I should like to ask tomorrow which of these figures is correct.

A further new feature provided for by the bill is the protection of the seasonally unemployed during the period from January 1 to March 31 of each year. This year the period will be from March 31 to April 15.

I wish to draw attention to the fact that under the present Unemployment Insurance Act a large number of people who have paid into the fund for years, and who are now sick or incapacitated in some way and are not seeking employment, will get no benefits from the fund. I think the government should consider that point and do something about it.

In my opinion the bill does not go far enough. I think the benefits should be extended, as was originally intended, not only to those persons now included, but to all classes of employed persons.

Those, honourable senators, are all the remarks I wish to make at the present time. I should like to be present when the bill is considered in committee tomorrow, to ask questions on many of the sections which I do not fully understand. I am sure there are other honourable senators who, like myself, do not fully understand all the provisions of this bill. I trust that the departmental officials will be able to give us the required information.

As I have already said, I want to facilitate as much as possible the passage of this bill. I understand that the government feels that it is necessary to commence payments on March 1, and I do not think that the senators on the opposition side of the house will oppose second reading tonight.

Hon. J. P. Howden: Honourable senators, I should like to follow up the remarks of my honourable colleague from Winnipeg (Hon. Mr. Davis) on the question of the eligibility of hospital employees.

I gather from reading the bill that the ordinary employees of hospitals are not to be included under this legislation. I know that the St. Boniface hospital, which is one of the largest institutions of its kind in Manitoba, and even in Canada, is opposed to having its employees included in this scheme. I thought perhaps the honourable leader might make a statement on the position of hospital employees.

Hon. Mr. Robertson: Honourable senators, I have not got a precise answer for my honourable friend's question, but the bill as I understand it has nothing to do with the admission into the insurance scheme of any particular class of workers. I believe that new classes of employees are admitted by proclamation by the government.

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: Does not this bill bring in the loggers?

Hon. Mr. Robertson: No. The loggers were brought in by an order in council, which I am tabling this evening, and the benefits are being extended to them. I drew the attention of the house to persons—Class 3—who benefited as a result of the logging industry in eastern Canada being brought under the Act. As to the hospital employees, I think they would be brought in by proclamation.

Hon. Mr. Howden: Is there any coercion so far as the bringing in of hospital employees is concerned?

Hon. Mr. Robertson: I could not answer my friend's question explicitly. It may well be that when any new class comes under the provisions of the Act, there are some who oppose the move. For instance, I suppose some of the loggers in eastern Canada might feel that coercion was exercised. I can only say that the legislation before us does not give the answer to my friend's question.

Hon. Mr. Howden: Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Davis: May I address a further question to the honourable leader of the government? What is considered to be the critical point of unemployment? Is it 9 per cent of the population?

Hon. Mr. Robertson: I am sure that opinions vary greatly as to what is the critical point in the unemployment picture. I suppose it is critical to the person who is out of a job, whether the total unemployment be 1 per cent or 9 per cent of the population. We could take the figure that I gave as of February 2, which, I am informed, was largely seasonal unemployment. My information is that by reason of the cold weather which visited the summer-like province of British Columbia an extreme amount of unemployment was experienced in that area. The high peak reached in that province may have been balanced by conditions in other parts of Canada. As I say I am not in a position to give a precise answer to what is the critical point of unemployment. In my opinion one must consider the particular area, and whether the problem is a temporary one, and will evaporate with the winter snows. I am