

Social Security

workers' wages. However, it was not until just recently, in July 1966, that further deductions from workers' wages were made for the purpose of the Canada Pension Plan.

• (5:00 p.m.)

At the beginning, these regulations, privileges and benefits were made available only to workers in industry, and they exempted groups of workers in agriculture, logging and so on. When farm organizations saw the disadvantage under which agricultural workers laboured, agricultural workers in the meantime being more difficult to obtain because industrial production had increased in this country, those farm organizations sought some avenue whereby they might make applicable to farm workers benefits similar to those that had been given to industrial workers. Accordingly they presented briefs to the government of the day, and eventually these plans were made available to agricultural workers. Effective on January 1, 1966, at the time when the Canada Pension Plan was introduced, agricultural workers had to pay deductions from their wages.

The second page of the pamphlet distributed by the government when the Canada Pension Plan was put into operation reads in part as follows. The heading is, "Employment Not Covered", and this relates specifically to my resolution. Underneath the heading are found the following words:

Employment as a migratory worker—in occupations like farming, fishing, trapping, hunting, logging—where you work less than 25 days a year for the same employer or where you earn less than \$250 a year from the same employer;

In April, 1967, the unemployment insurance legislation was extended to cover agricultural workers. The directive which was sent to all employers of farm labour on August 24 reads in part as follows:

—Unemployment insurance regulations—

—and this refers to agricultural workers—

—have therefore been changed to bring them in line with the provisions of the Canada Pension Plan as they pertain to the payment of contributions for casual agricultural workers.

A temporary or casual employee in agriculture or horticulture is one who earns less than \$250.00 in cash wages and works for less than 25 days in a calendar year. Effective immediately such an employee is not insurable.

Plans such as this that apply to agricultural workers have been in operation for two seasons. It is time for government officials charged with the administration of such plans to make an assessment of the success of their

[Mr. Knowles (Norfolk-Haldimand).]

operation. I propose to outline to hon. member some of the results which have become apparent in these two years of operation, and I wish to suggest ways in which improvements may be brought about.

I must say that government officials charged with the responsibility for putting into operation these plans took steps to make farmers well acquainted with the way in which the schemes would operate. Employers of agricultural labour do not quarrel with the provisions that are made for those who work permanently on farms—that is, for those who work a whole season. Farmers are happy to see such workers receiving benefits. My resolution has to do only with migratory workers.

At meetings sponsored by the departments of agriculture in the provinces the government made its position clear. I myself attended a meeting in our organization to familiarize myself with the farmer's part in the operation of this plan. Officials from the Unemployment Insurance Commission and from the area taxation offices came to these meetings, explained the plans to farmers, and heard complaints and objections, which were many. As a matter of fact I felt sorry for officials who tried to explain this complicated legislation to our farmers. The standard answer from these people to farmers' objections was, "We do not make the laws; we only interpret and enforce them. You will have to talk to your member of parliament".

I am now speaking to the government and asking it to recognize our farmers' problems. With the utmost sincerity I plead with members of the government charged with administering these plans to heed what I am about to say.

First, the farmer lacks training in accounting, yet he is obliged, under the regulations, to keep all manner of records. He must show the wages paid, the days worked, how much is attributable to board and meals, since these items are counted as wages, and in addition, he must make deductions with respect to unemployment insurance and the Canada Pension Plan as well as income tax.

I know many farmers who are skilled in raising crops; yet they have not the remotest idea of accounting procedures or how to keep the simplest records. Also, the farmer just has not the time to devote to all these tasks. He himself will be labouring during the harvest season and he may not have time to look after his casual labourers. The farmer hires his labourers, some of whom may work only a day or two, and quit. He must replace those