

nation, then it seems to me there should still be an unemployment insurance fund upon which he could draw to maintain his income at the same standard throughout his retraining as when he is employed.

I started contributing to the unemployment insurance fund when it was originally established. At that time I was employed in an industry that worked 365 days a year. It was an industry in which there was very little unemployment. In fact we were anxious to get our employment hours reduced to a reasonable level of 48 hours a week, and it took many years to get them down to 56 hours a week. Although in the gold mining industry we were not subject to the normal risks of unemployment, yet we were quite happy to be covered by unemployment insurance. There was the risk that a gold mine would close down on some occasion. There was a risk with respect to the age factor of miners.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am violently opposed to the proposal to bring people under the unemployment insurance fund who are in absolutely no danger of becoming unemployed. I do not see a teacher becoming unemployed for many years to come. I do not see a doctor becoming unemployed for many years to come. I do not see nurses becoming unemployed for many years to come. I do not see civil servants ever becoming unemployed. As members of parliament, when we will no longer be serving any useful purpose I am certain that when we find ourselves unemployed there will still be civil servants to hand out the dole, and to keep track of other civil servants engaged in that work. The history of the last depression indicated that if ever there were people who were not going to become unemployed, it was the civil servants of that day.

Changes are going to be made in the Unemployment Insurance Act. I think some of the changes should be major ones, but I disagree with the change made by the Minister of Labour when he gave up half his department, that controlling the Unemployment Insurance Commission being retained, and the National Employment Service being transferred to his colleague, the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Marchand), who transferred it to the national manpower centres.

I maintain that those who are providing unemployment benefits also have a responsibility to try to provide jobs. I do not like to see a manpower centre in one city and an unemployment insurance office in another.

Unemployment Insurance Act

Being separated, they cannot provide satisfactory service to the people who need work. The people now offering jobs never see the unemployed. So far as the employers are concerned, the unemployed do not exist. People staffing the manpower centres do not know the number of unemployed unless they read the D.B.S. statistics, because the unemployed no longer stand outside their offices or pass through them once a week.

The amendment which we are now being asked to pass is a minor one, and I think it will receive the support of all hon. members. Since we are increasing our standard of living by increasing our wages it is only proper that the benefits paid should be in keeping with the contributions made by the workers. However, I urge hon. members to consider seriously the weakness we have created by dividing the functions of the National Employment Service and the Unemployment Insurance Commission.

The National Employment Service and the Unemployment Insurance Commission are now administered by two separate departments, and I have been shocked to hear reports from some officials in both these departments stating that they have been given instructions that there is to be no co-operation between the two departments. The reason given is that if there is co-operation, then the divorce of functions between the two departments will not have been completed.

We have watched the government's machinations with respect to the Wheat Board. From time to time members of the cabinet have asked themselves, "Who among us has a little knowledge of the Wheat Board"? To them it does not matter if the Wheat Board comes under the administration of the Department of Finance, the Department of Trade and Commerce or the Department of Agriculture. Responsibility for that board has been shifted from department to department, and this is not a good thing.

I maintain that the responsibility for the manpower centres and the Unemployment Insurance Commission should not have been divided. In practice it is not working out, and I think that hon. members who have had experience with unemployment insurance matters should give the minister the benefit of their advice. This division of responsibility was a ridiculous change which should not have occurred.