

Unemployment Insurance Act

\$100 to the fund, the municipality contributes \$100 to the fund, and at the end of the three years, after the fund has benefited to the extent of \$200 and the federal government's contribution as well, the employee is then excepted from coverage and henceforth pays no insurance.

When the case was presented to the committee the reaction of the minister was that if, as was conceded, policemen and firemen were in similar employment it was probable the answer should be to insure policemen also. With that I cannot agree and because I cannot agree I do not approve of the recommendation in the fourth report of the committee to the effect that provincial and municipal police should be brought under coverage. I point out once more that I do not think sufficient consideration has been given to the fact that firemen cannot build up a sufficient number of contributions in six months to benefit if they are unemployed, that the time when they leave the force before becoming permanent employees is the only time they can possibly qualify for benefit because from then on they would leave the force either by reason of health or else for cause and could not benefit in any event under those conditions. If, on the other hand, they build up these three years it simply means they are making, as I said before, a contribution to the fund, and it is actually a tax on the type of employment in which they are engaged.

I acknowledge the intention of the committee in recommending the advisability of increasing the period of maximum benefits beyond 30 weeks as provided in the bill and I shall have something to say about that presently, and also that the regulations respecting married women should be reviewed to eliminate the additional contribution requirements after the first separation from employment subsequent to marriage. Once more, Mr. Chairman, this is somewhat in the nature of a pious hope. The very fact that the commission is practically instructed to make regulations with regard to married women opens the door to any regulations which the commission desires to make. Even if the commission accepts the suggestion of the committee and eliminates these additional benefits, there is nothing to stop them from turning around and making other regulations which would have substantially the same effect, the effect of disqualifying from benefit those women who marry and of requiring them to work for two years in order to establish their availability for employment. We had asked that the subclause which gave permission to the commission to make

[Mrs. Fairclough.]

these regulations should be struck out. I might say that there is no other class of workers who are so treated. No male worker is disqualified by reason of the fact that his wife is employed. Yet many classes of workers attempt from time to time to take advantage of the act, and some of them are successful.

The brief which was presented by the commission makes serious charges against women workers. In my estimation it is a one-sided argument which seeks to set out that women are undesirable workers, and that they have little or no interest in obtaining employment, if they can qualify for benefits, and that they resort to many ruses to procure these results. As I said in committee, I consider this brief a slander against women workers.

Certainly, by admission in the brief itself, the regulation which was made effective following the meeting of the advisory committee in 1950 was made by a committee on which no woman was serving. I hope that the minister will see that without delay the recommendation of the report with reference to representation of women on the advisory committee will be carried out.

The brief seeks to substantiate this section, first by pointing out the number of women who were disqualified and relating that number to the number who had allowed their applications for employment to lapse; and, secondly, by claiming that very few applicants, relatively speaking, had been disqualified. Now, you cannot have it both ways. Either the number of women was substantial—and the reason for that is set forth in the regulation—or else it was so small that it was not worth considering in any event.

I submit there is no more attempt on the part of married women to procure unjustified benefits than there is on the part of men. No figures were given us to show the percentage of male applicants who were disqualified for one reason or another, nor was it shown that most if not all the statistical information given in support of this disputed section did not apply equally to male workers.

I submit further that it is impossible for any administrative officer of the commission to state truthfully that he or she knows the intention of a claimant. To use such phrases as those which appear in the commission report—"no serious intention of working"; "no genuine interest in getting employment"; "evasion, intentional or otherwise", and this further phrase which I particularly noted, "some undoubtedly kept their applications alive pending the outcome of appeal, or to take advantage of any possible changes in