

*Unemployment Insurance*

many of them go out into bush camps as soon as farming work allows them to do so. Those workers spend many months in the woods of Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine in the employ of companies and contractors.

Ever since there have been forestry operations in the American states to the south of Beauce, Compton-Frontenac, Sherbrooke, Stanstead, Richmond-Wolfe ridings and of many other constituencies, many Canadian workers have sought jobs there, and this will be the case for many years to come.

Of the three American states that have undertaken forest development, only the state of Vermont has entered into an agreement with the Canadian government. That was in May 1948.

Under this agreement, woodsmen from the province of Quebec working in that state can qualify for unemployment insurance as soon as they are back home, if they have worked in the woods throughout the fall and winter.

Since workers in Canada are covered by the unemployment insurance when they are out of work; since woodsmen working in Canadian forests for companies or contractors are also covered and may draw insurance benefits when they are unemployed, I support this resolution and I urge the Department of Labour to continue to take the appropriate steps so that an agreement be arrived at between Canada and those American states, enabling our Canadian woodsmen to contribute to the unemployment insurance fund and American employers also to contribute an equal share, so that woodsmen may draw benefits when they are unemployed.

American forestry operators are pleased to have Canadian bushworkers, because they are known as good, strong and robust workers. It is therefore only fair that the governments of those American states also recognize that those bushworkers are entitled to the same protection as the others and that they have a right to a living after the bush camp closes down. As far as we are concerned, there is only one way of recognizing the services rendered by those workers, and that is by letting both the operators and the men contribute to the unemployment fund as is done in the case of Vermont. Those woodsmen will thus be on equal footing with the workers in the Canadian bush and in Vermont. Afterwards, they would be able to work on their farm, harvest the small crop it will yield, and in this way support their family.

How many farmers have gone to the bush and are still there because they have to. They leave their wife and their children behind all winter, since they are not able to get from their own farm the immediate revenue required to make their annual payments on their farm. And nowadays, more than in previous times, with mechanization of farms, farmers are in need of capital more than ever. That is why, in the constituency of Wolfe only, a great number of farmers left home with one or two of their sons to go to work in the forests of the neighbouring American states in order to earn what they need to make the required payment on their farms or farm machinery.

When those farmers are in a better financial situation, they will be glad to remain on their farms 12 months a year. To provide them with unemployment insurance benefits on their return from the bush is another means of helping farmers. Such benefits will mean, not only for my constituency but for all others where there are lumbermen, betterment of the economic life of our areas.

I am sure that with the diligence we know the government possesses, it will succeed in coming to an agreement which will be satisfactory to that class of workers.

**Mr. Marcel Bourbonnais (Vaudreuil-Soulanges):** Mr. Speaker, this resolution will have the effect of correcting the weaknesses of the Unemployment Insurance Act. I think it would be in the general interest to take appropriate measures to enable any Canadian citizen holding an insurable employment in another country, especially in the United States, and residing in Canada, to be eligible for unemployment insurance benefits on the same basis as other Canadian workers.

Even if talks with Maine and New Hampshire authorities were not successful, I maintain that another solution should be found. For instance, why not allow an employee of the group mentioned to remit his contributions direct to the unemployment insurance commission, after supplying the necessary evidence of his length of employment, and any information that the unemployment insurance commission may require.

If my understanding of the Unemployment Insurance Act is correct, the purpose of the act is to protect from financial hardships resulting from unemployment every wage-earning Canadian whose income does not permit him to have any part of it, a subject