

Unemployment Insurance

Mr. JOHNSTON: Very well. I did not want to go into too much detail—

Mr. MITCHELL: Because you haven't any detail.

Mr. JOHNSTON: —but since the minister is asking for it I am sure he will not mind if I elaborate a little. It has been stated already that those who do not obey a direction from selective service in regard to employment will be given only so long before having their benefits cut off. If that is not getting dictatorial I do not know what is. I shall go into that a little more fully when we come to discuss what is meant by "suitable employment" in the bill. I was not going to discuss the bill in particular to-day, but I do think the minister is going to run into a great deal of difficulty in the administration of this act when he comes to define what suitable employment is. That is a difficulty right now, as a matter of fact.

Mr. MITCHELL: Has my hon. friend a definition?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I can give the minister his own definition; I do not suppose he will object to that. I quote from page 3105 of *Hansard* for yesterday:

On the other hand it is likewise specifically provided that after a lapse of a reasonable interval from the commencement of unemployment, employment in another occupation is not to be considered unsuitable (in other words it is suitable) if the wages offered are not lower and the conditions not less favourable than those obtaining in that occupation.

Then the minister went on to say:

—what is not suitable to-day may well be suitable a month from to-day.

The minister will correct me if I am wrong, but there I think he was trying to define what is suitable employment. I must admit that he has defined it very vaguely, but I do not think he would care to endeavour to define it right now. I too realize the difficulty of defining just what suitable employment might be.

Mr. WARREN: Would the hon. member tell the house just what he considers unsuitable employment?

Mr. JOHNSTON: The hon. member probably was not in the house when I began to speak. I was giving the minister's definition; surely the hon. member would not object to that. I did not want to get into too much of an argument on this matter—

Mr. WARREN: I should like an answer to my question. What is unsuitable employment?

[Mr. Mitchell.]

Mr. JOHNSTON: I will tell you what suitable employment is. It is employment a person desires of his own accord, which gives a desirable remuneration. Would the hon. member object to that? Anything else is not suitable.

Mr. WARREN: I have never known of unsuitable employment.

Mr. JOHNSTON: If I tell you what suitable employment is I imagine you would have sufficient intelligence to know what unsuitable employment is. You just put in the negative form and you have your definition. A moment ago the hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Croll) mentioned what might be considered unsuitable remuneration, when he said the total payment to a married man was \$14.40 a week or about \$60 a month. In my opinion that would not be suitable remuneration.

Mr. WARREN: Well, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. JOHNSTON: If the hon. member will just sit down and wait until we consider the bill, we can go into these detailed discussions then.

Mr. WARREN: Perhaps the hon. member would answer this question. Did he ever know of a man with health and a little initiative who could not add to that amount, in some way, through his own enterprise?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I do not think I quite got the question.

Mr. WARREN: Did the hon. member ever meet a man who was living on unemployment insurance who could not add to his income, if he was in good health and had a little initiative? Could he not add something through his own enterprise?

Mr. JOHNSTON: But the act definitely limits him in that regard. If he is in receipt of other remuneration, that is taken into consideration in fixing the amount he receives. I am afraid my hon. friend has not gone over the act very carefully.

Mr. WARREN: I know something about it.

Mr. JOHNSTON: A few years ago in the old age pension committee the hon. gentleman was very much disturbed over the possibility that old age pensioners might receive increased pensions. I should think he would be also disturbed over the possibility that a material advantage would be given these people under this legislation.

Mr. GRAYDON: Better call the whole thing off.