

Unemployment Insurance Act

people at 65 are more active physically and mentally than people who are many years younger. Consequently, I feel that the restriction in the paying out of benefits from 51 weeks to 30 weeks strikes at the older age group in our population. The amount of money that is going to be saved is not large, but even so it is going to be applied to the younger age group who may become unemployed, and once again you have the older people making some sacrifice on behalf of the younger. I think that is wrong.

I think the commission should review the matter again and I think the minister should announce to the house that a change is going to be made. If he is going to advance the restriction from the proposed 30 weeks to 36 weeks, as we have been told by spokesmen on his behalf, we should know it very soon, but if he will restore the 51 weeks we will be quite happy.

Mr. Carter: Mr. Chairman, I note in *Votes and Proceedings* of the 8th of June, page 690, that the committee on industrial relations which studied the bill now before us made the following recommendation:

Your committee recommends that the government consider the advisability of extending the Unemployment Insurance Act to cover

(1) the following classes of fishermen:

- (a) Those who work for wages; and
- (b) Those who work in such other parts of the fishing industry as are amenable to coverage.

As one whose constituents are nearly all fishermen, I would be very remiss in my duty if I did not rise in my place today to thank the committee for making that recommendation and to give it my strongest support. In the case of those who work for wages, it is a matter of principle. I think we should proceed on the basis of what is right, and it does not appear to me to be right that we should restrict the application of a principle and leave out people solely because their numbers are small. Surely the application of the principle is the most important consideration, and the application should be made as widely as possible.

A month ago today I had the privilege of attending the 1955 convention of the Newfoundland federation of fishermen. At that convention the following resolution was passed:

Whereas there is a definite and dire need in Newfoundland for the workers in one of Newfoundland's chief primary industries—fishermen—to secure insurance benefits during the off season period of employment and whereas to satisfy the need the following four main prerequisites are essential for the granting of such insurance benefits:

1. Certification that fishermen have actually fished for the period required for the granting of unemployment benefits.

2. That the fishermen shall contribute the required amounts towards the insurance fund.

3. The agreement shall be reached as to who is the employer of the fishermen and who shall pay the employer's share of the contribution.

4. The federal government shall be prepared to pay its proportionate share;

And whereas the convention of the Newfoundland federation of fishermen now feels strongly that the above prerequisites can be met and the time has arrived when the fishermen can no longer be denied equal treatment with other workers in the field of unemployment insurance benefits;

Therefore be it resolved that this convention is unanimously of the opinion that it is feasible even under the Unemployment Insurance Act to grant to such fishermen; and

Be it further resolved that these benefits be assured before the 1956 fishery begins.

In support of that resolution the federation of fishermen prepared a brief containing a scheme which shows how this might be put into effect. This is the scheme suggested:

1. All fishermen should be registered on or before May 1 of each year, and in registering each and every fisherman should be required to give the following information:

- (a) The type of fishing engaged in for the past three years;
- (b) The time engaged for the past three years;
- (c) Other types of employment at which said applicant has been engaged for the past three years and the length of time so employed in each year.

2. When this form has been completed, each fisherman should be mailed a registration card and an insurance book. His card will be his permit to purchase stamps for his unemployment book.

3. Fishermen so registered become automatically contributors on May 1 of each year and thereafter, if he continues at fishing until November 30. In all, as a fisherman, he must make some 180 contributions.

4. Being recognized as his own employer, he must make his own contribution of nine cents per day, and also the employer's contribution of nine cents per day. He may, however, make this through a monthly stamp contribution—\$2.34 per month.

5. Stamps may be purchased at designated post offices, upon presentation of his registration card.

6. Many fishermen after fishing voyage is over at the end of August, seek woods work. He could then take his unemployment book and deposit it with his employer in the lumbering industry, or similarly any other work at which he might find employment.

This seems to be the simplest system workable, seven months of contributions.

At the end of November he would mail his book to the unemployment office. December month would be the off season month, during which time the officials of said department could register the applicant and arrange for the weekly rates of benefit. Benefits should be paid as from January 1st in any one year extending to April 15, or a total of 15 weeks, at \$24.00 per week.

We conscientiously feel that this system could operate in the best interests of all, with few abuses, and with very little additional administrative costs, other than over a period of two months in the year during May and December.

The executive and officers of the Newfoundland federation of fishermen pledge their support and full co-operation of all its locals in assisting in any way possible to make the scheme operative.

When the brief submitted by the inter-departmental committee was before the