

Unemployment Insurance Act

benefits are not so anxious to receive the benefits as they are to have a job. I am pleased that the government has recognized that it costs the unemployed as much to live after their insurance benefits run out as it did before their regular insurance benefits ran out. Certainly I would say these people require 100 per cent of the benefit and not just 70 per cent. I would, therefore, be ready to agree to the second part of the resolution. These men, however, probably find that their financial resources are completely depleted by this time, and therefore they require much more help. Possibly it might be desirable to increase their benefits so that they would have something worth living for.

The purpose of unemployment insurance, as I understand it, is to tide people over that short period between jobs when they are unemployed. The second half of the resolution is proof that the government now recognizes this problem is no longer a transitional one. There is no longer that short period when a man gives up a job to seek another. Today he finds himself in the awkward position of having no work. He cannot find a job. He has given up his former position, so he soon uses up his unemployment insurance benefits. This resolution is a recognition by the government that the problem is no longer a transitional one, nor is it a seasonal one. We have the continually growing problem of unemployment.

The need for assistance is not so much a need of financial assistance on a long-term basis as it is a need for the establishment of jobs. I wish, therefore, to heartily endorse what the hon. member for Bow River suggested when he said that these people require work. Now, morally and physically it is an obligation of this government to make jobs available by the adoption of an economic system based on a common-sense approach. We have the men, we have the materials and we have the means of transporting those men and materials. We have the money available. However, for some reason or other unknown to me we do not seem to be able to bring these groups together.

I would suggest to the government that they give consideration to an amendment to the Unemployment Insurance Act whereby it would be possible to utilize, let us say, \$100 million of the fund to set up a revolving self-liquidating fund to be used only at times when such conditions as we find today are present. I would say that the purpose of setting up such a fund would be to make money immediately available to get the men, materials and transportation together to create jobs for these individuals. That is

what they want. The creation of these jobs would take goods off the shelf, about which we hear our distressed merchants speaking so frequently.

These jobs might be created by building projects that the government had not seen fit to put in its estimates. In that respect, if the Minister of National Defence were here I would propose an armory for the city of New Westminster. Such a project might well put a good number of men to work. One could think of the erection of hospitals, schools and other public utilities such as sewage and water plants for the smaller municipalities. These are the things that need to be done in this country. We have the money, we have the material and we have the men, but this government has not the ability to put them together. Therefore, while I am heartily in agreement with this particular resolution at this time I would urge the minister to consider introducing further legislation to set up such a fund with that purpose in mind.

Mr. Hees: This measure is aimed at helping winter unemployment and seasonal unemployment; but as has been said by a number of speakers this afternoon, a great deal of the unemployment in Canada today is not of a seasonal nature. It is becoming permanent or semi-permanent in some areas. What I am interested in finding out from the minister, and I hope he will tell us when he introduces his bill on Thursday, is what the government expects people to do when their unemployment insurance credits expire before they are eligible for these extra benefits.

Now, as has been pointed out, these people have to eat, they have to feed their families and clothe themselves and their families, pay rent and so on. I want to know from the government what they expect the people to do, whose credits have expired early in the season, or because they have not contributed sufficiently long to become eligible for these supplementary benefits. This summer I found some communities where unemployment is certainly not seasonal. The first one I am going to mention is well known to the minister because it is in his own province. I know he has visited the community, and I know he is concerned about it, but being concerned and doing something about it are two different things. To be quite honest, I think the minister would like to do a great deal more than has been possible so far. I believe he has a genuine feeling of sympathy for the people concerned.

I am speaking of the people who live in Marysville, New Brunswick, where the whole community depends on one large textile mill.