

Unemployment Insurance Act

reason we are most anxious to expedite the work, not only of the industrial relations committee, but also of this committee; and to that end we do not propose to hold up the proceedings of this house. However, we think there is still a place for comment on some of the more contentious parts of the bill, and in particular I should like to refer once more to the matter of placing a woman on the unemployment insurance commission. True enough, the report which was brought down says:

Your committee further recommends that consideration be given to the appointment of a woman to the unemployment insurance commission and to the advisory committee.

I think it would be a fairly easy thing to have representation of women on the advisory committee, but under the present provisions which are set out in the act on the form of a commission it is going to be practically impossible to have a woman on that commission, certainly for ten years and probably forever. Accordingly I would say that the recommendation in the report is nothing more than a pious hope, and because of that I must admit to some disappointment, at the same time being grateful that the problem is recognized, even if it gets only a passing nod. I still think that the only chance of having a woman commissioner or women commissioners on this commission is by enlarging the commission and permitting both the workers and management each to appoint one woman and one man to that commission, which would make a five-man commission.

Mr. Chairman, there are some other matters that we discussed in the industrial relations committee but the proceedings of this committee in printed form are not complete up to the present time. Accordingly I presume that this bill will have passed and probably the estimates of the minister's department also long before we actually have the printed proceedings in our hands. I do not know whether the minister's gesture toward the Minister of National Health and Welfare means that because of his assuming the task of the minister the deliberations will thereby be prolonged. In any event, I still think there is a good chance that the consideration of the estimates will have been finished before we have the proceedings of the committee in our hands.

During the deliberations of the committee we had considerable discussion with reference to excepting from coverage those engaged in fire fighting in the municipalities. I still feel that the committee did not completely understand the conditions under which these men work, nor do I believe they gave sufficient consideration to the parallel between the fire fighters and the members of the police

force. In the committee the members of this group moved an amendment to the clause in question but it was defeated. However, I really feel that I must bring it in again particularly since the final report of the committee, instead of giving recognition to the exception from coverage for firemen, seeks to bring in the police in an effort to even up the situation.

The very fact that they have gone so far as to agree that the police and the firemen are in comparable employment and labour under much the same circumstances is a step forward; but I should like to point out, Mr. Chairman, that actually the fact that the police have had exception from coverage is because of their position in what is taken to be permanent employment. If that definition of their employment is even 75 per cent correct, may I say that the firemen enjoy even more permanent employment than the police because, from the figures available, it is clear that there is a greater turnover in the employment of police than there is in that of firemen. Moreover, under the regulations which obtain in their type of employment, the firemen are considered to be permanent employees in from three months to six months of their joining the force. That is to say, they either leave the force within three to six months or they are assumed to be permanent employees from that time on. If they do not appear to be suited to the employment or if they themselves feel that that employment is not to their liking, they leave the force in about six months' time.

Under the order governing the certificate of permanency which was dated January 1, 1954, permanency cannot be established until three years have passed. Hence it is not possible for the municipality to say at the end of six months that this person is a permanent employee and accordingly is excepted from coverage. No, he must proceed to pay unemployment insurance and the municipality must proceed to pay its share of the unemployment insurance for the three years. I should like to draw attention to the brief presented by the commission covering federal, provincial and municipal employees. They refer to the assumption that—

... such employment is not subject to the contractions and expansions that affect private industry. Hence it does not need protection against unemployment and payment of contributions by permanent public servants would be a tax rather than insurance against a contingency.

These are the commission's own words, and I must say I agree. That is precisely what it is in the case of municipal firemen. It is a tax at a rate of approximately \$32 a year for three years, or nearly \$100 altogether. The fireman himself contributes about