

*Supply—Labour*

I am leaving that idea with the minister and I think it should be proceeded with and a study made, at least. I am convinced that millions of dollars in cash are wasted in this country on the inadequate and insecure pension plans that exist today.

There is a second idea which I wish to leave with the minister. It has to do with the thinking we have today along the lines of a guaranteed annual minimum wage. I was glad to hear the hon. member for Hamilton West quote Walter Reuther with approval tonight. That is one of Walter Reuther's ideas, and I consider that Walter Reuther is today one of North America's outstanding labour men, sound, solid, and courageous. He has been an advocate of this for some time. A guaranteed annual minimum wage is now the policy of the auto workers' union in Canada and the United States. They have made a study of it, and the steel workers have also adopted it as one of their objectives.

The reason they do so is they know that if defence spending in the United States and defence spending in Canada falls off, the inevitable result is going to be widespread unemployment. They are sure, and I am sure despite the size of our fund, that if there were any great recession that fund would not stand up very long. If the recession was prolonged and in any way drastic, that would be the result. These organizations that are in the field of protecting workers realize the situation, and they are asking for a guaranteed annual minimum wage, a wage below which no one in the country should be permitted to work.

I think this is fair and reasonable because we have it now in many sections of the country. Our civil servants have a guaranteed annual minimum wage regardless of the productivity of the country. Their wages are fixed and they continue to draw a yearly salary, and there are approximately 140,000 of them across the country. Most people who are on salary in executive positions with large organizations across the country have guaranteed annual wages, and it is not an unreasonable request for the worker of this country who may anticipate unemployment, and who may have to take a drastic cut in his standard of living if he is obliged to live on unemployment insurance alone if a recession should be prolonged.

I think the department should give some study to that demand because it is going to be, as it is now in the United States, one of the major objectives of the whole labour movement. I think it is a reasonable one because there is nothing in the old fallacy that the social security payments and the

guaranteed annual minimum wages I am talking about tonight are money thrown away.

People say, where are you going to find the money? The prosperity of the country depends largely on keeping purchasing power in the hands of the people. If there is a recession in the automobile industry or the steel industry, but the employees of those industries get some money to buy the products of other industries, they are keeping large groups of workers employed in the other industries. This is one of the benefits of unemployment insurance. I am not going to argue it any further than that. I know the minister is going to hear a lot more about this within the next couple of years.

The third and final thing I want to mention is this. I agree with the hon. member for Hamilton West that regulation 5A(1) arising out of section 35A of the main act, is rank discrimination. I have said that ever since that regulation was adopted. It is discrimination against married women. As the minister knows I have had quite a few cases, and I have dragged one of them clear to Ottawa to the umpire, but without success. It is only a regulation which the department made. The act gives them the right, of course, but the department can change that regulation.

During this session we introduced a measure to continue the payment of unemployment insurance benefits when an unemployed person becomes ill. Most or all of the cases which I have met arose because the woman concerned knew nothing about the regulations, and the employer who wrote her separation slip knew nothing about the regulations. Once that slip had gone into the office, that was the end of it. There was no changing it.

I strongly urge the minister to change that regulation or to take it out of the regulations altogether. Let the offices decide whether or not a woman is eligible. I think the act itself is good enough without that discriminatory regulation. In one of the cases, I pointed out that this woman had worked for 10 years. She got married and then went back to work and worked more than enough time, according to the provisions of the act, but she took her separation on the ground that she arrived at a condition where she had slowed up in her work. She could not get her unemployment insurance benefits. The argument made to me was that it was like fire insurance. You pay insurance for 10 or 25 years, and if your house does not burn down the premiums are not returned.