

*Supply—Labour*

a year in excess of the total of the contributions received. In other words, why focus so much attention on about 3 per cent of this drain and say nothing about the other 97 per cent?

That is what is being done by certain writers in the daily papers and by certain people who have access to the air waves over our broadcasting stations. In addition to that it has been stated that now the fishermen are included this fund is no longer an insurance fund but has become a welfare fund. There again it seems strange to me that fishermen should be singled out for this distinction because if it is a welfare fund now it was a welfare fund long before any fisherman got any benefits from it.

All the people who are employed on the great lakes know that they are going to be out of work during the winter. That fact is a certainty. They were included years before the fisherman was included. If it is a welfare fund for the fisherman surely it is a welfare fund for them. The same applies to all the stevedores along the great lakes' fronts, along the St. Lawrence seaway and to the people employed in our canals and at the Montreal and Toronto docks. It is true as well, in some instances, of those employed in the forest industry. All those people were included long before the fisherman was included and nobody said a word about the insurance fund being turned into a welfare fund. It is strange that now, because a few fishermen have at last been admitted, a hue and cry has been raised and severe criticism expressed of the fact that fishermen are at last eligible for insurance.

Some of the most severe critics of the extension of insurance benefits to fishermen have been mainland firms and organizations such as chambers of commerce and the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. I should think that the Canadian Manufacturers' Association should be the very last to make any comment on this question—

**Mr. Starr:** Mr. Chairman, may I interrupt the hon. member for a moment. I believe he is right in saying there has been a great deal said about what the inclusion of fishermen has cost the fund. To put the record straight I must say that fishermen came under the unemployment insurance act on April 1, 1957. From that day until March 31, 1959 the inclusion of fishermen cost the fund a total of \$13,880,000 over a period of over two years.

**Mr. Carter:** Over two years it has cost less than \$14 million and this has been receiving adverse publicity in publications put out by chambers of commerce and by the Canadian

Manufacturers' Association and over the air. I thank the minister for setting the record straight in that respect.

These manufacturers in complaining and criticizing the inclusion of fishermen are saying in effect that it is all right to include the people who manufacture the fish, the people who process it in plants, the people who convey it from the boat and weigh it and carry it to the plants and ship it to the markets; in fact, it is all right for everybody who handles the fish to get unemployment insurance benefits. On the other hand the poor man who has to go out and risk his life and undergo the most severe hardship and danger should not be included. They are saying in effect that it is wicked and wrong for him to get unemployment insurance benefits. Surely the critics of this should reorient their thinking. In my opinion the fisherman has a greater claim to benefits than any of the others because he produces the raw material which provides not only the employment but the opportunity for all the other people to get benefits and also the opportunity for the manufacturer to make a profit.

It has been said that the contributions of fishermen are very small in comparison with the benefit period. I saw in a publication a statement to the effect that a fisherman can get benefits for 5½ months. It is true that he can, but so can everybody else who qualifies for seasonal benefits. These people should know that the number of weeks of benefit a fisherman gets depends on the number of stamps he has. In Newfoundland this year the majority of our fishermen did not earn enough stamps to get benefits at all. I suppose that approximately 60 per cent or 70 per cent of our fishermen could not qualify because they could not acquire sufficient stamps. Another 30 per cent got the bare 15 stamps and as a result of that received benefits for ten weeks. The average benefit period for seasonal unemployment is less than 15 weeks or thereabouts.

When these manufacturers and chambers of commerce wax indignant about the fisherman receiving benefits and when they draw comparisons between the amount the fisherman contributes and the amount he draws out, I should like to remind them of this. The fisherman is a taxpayer. He pays sales tax on everything he buys. In addition to that he contributes his share to the benefits that are paid to all the people who secure employment because of the product he produces. These people must be very naive if they do not realize that all of this comes out of the price paid to the fisherman for his fish and he, being the low man on the totem pole, has to carry that burden.