

Unemployment Insurance Act

to be very typical of the way in which the present government approaches serious problems when our people are in need. The fact of the matter is, as I understand it, that no person who does not already qualify for regular benefits and supplementary benefits as well will qualify as a result of this measure. All the measure will do is to increase the amount of the supplementary benefits in the case of those who are already qualified for it and extend the period during which they can receive that benefit. In the light of the unemployment problem facing us at the present time we feel that this is a picayune answer. We welcome the measure but we hope that before the session goes very far something far more effective as an answer to the unemployment problem will be presented to parliament by the government across the way.

There is one assurance of perhaps a technical nature which I hope the Minister of Labour will be able to give us before the debate at this stage closes. He may recall, although he was not minister of labour at the time but was rather minister of veterans affairs, that when the bill establishing supplementary benefits in the Unemployment Insurance Act was introduced in 1950 it too was brought in in the very early days of the session and put through parliament in somewhat of a hurry. We understood before the bill was brought in that all it was to contain was simply the provision for supplementary benefits, but when we got the bill, without very much notice, we found that it had a lot of other items in it as well. Some of them were good and some of them we did not like. I refer, for example, to the provision making a difference in the case of married women which was tucked into that bill at that time. I hope the minister can assure us that so far as the bill to be based on this resolution is concerned there is nothing tucked into it apart from what is referred to specifically in the resolution.

I should like to say just one other word because, as all members realize, there will be an opportunity to discuss unemployment insurance generally later in the session and other opportunities to discuss unemployment itself. However, the word I should like to say at this time is this. Last session we learned that at the request of the national advisory council on manpower a study was being made by the national employment committee of the question of seasonal unemployment in Canada. Some of us liked the statements made by the Minister of Labour at that time to the effect that Canada should

not accept the difficulty of seasonal unemployment as a permanent one. His approach, as I understood it, was that we should try to keep away from the permanence of seasonal unemployment, and I for one dared to hope that when that report was made it would indicate that something was being done to alter the situation.

It is a very attractive report. I received it first in mimeographed form and later in a printed booklet. But as one goes through it it is not very encouraging. Really all it is is an analysis of the situation as it is. When one finds in a dozen places throughout the booklet the heading "remedies" he hopes that he will find some recommendations that may be acted upon. But such is not the case. These so-called remedies are simply reports from the various industries concerned as to what they are doing, successfully or otherwise, to try to minimize seasonal unemployment. I suggest that so far as this report is concerned it is merely an analysis of the picture as it exists. It does not represent that concerted attack on the problem of seasonal unemployment which I felt the minister was anxious to make. I raise that matter at this time because it seems to me it is closely related to this question of supplementary unemployment insurance benefits which, after all, are for a period of seasonal unemployment. I hope the minister will pursue that important question with real vigour.

Mr. Hahn: I am somewhat concerned over the anxiety of the government, Mr. Chairman, that we should hurry this resolution through because I feel the government should have thought of that last fall and probably should have brought us into session at that time. This would have given us ample opportunity to discuss these problems fully as they merit. This model government has once again shown its hindsight is much better than its foresight.

As I see it there are two parts to the resolution. The first part mentions the raising of the rates of supplementary benefits to the present rates of regular benefits and the second part mentions providing a minimum of 60 days' supplementary benefits to those who qualify. Both of these objectives are commendable, and they are both needed at present. However, they are both worth more careful consideration. They are both right and will, therefore, meet with the approval of every member in this house.

However, I believe we should keep in mind that this is an insurance measure, and not a handout. The recipients of these insurance