

The cost of living index went up from 145.1 in September of 1966 to 150.7 in September of 1967. This is an increase of 5.6 percentage points in a period of 12 months.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tardif): Order. It being five o'clock p.m. the house will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, notices of motions and public bills.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

SUGGESTED NON-PAYMENT BY PERSONS WORKING BEYOND NORMAL RETIREMENT AGE

Mr. S. J. Enns (Portage-Neepawa) moved:

That, in the opinion of this house, the government should give consideration to amending the Unemployment Insurance Act, to the effect that persons wishing to continue employment beyond their normal retirement age be not required to pay any unemployment insurance.

He said: Mr. Speaker, ever since the government took office in 1963 we have heard promises that the much needed revisions to the Unemployment Insurance Act would be brought about. In fact, there was a reference to this effect in the speech from the throne in 1963, again in 1964, and traces of it again in 1965 and 1966. Had these revisions taken place this motion would, of course, not have been necessary at all.

● (5:00 p.m.)

The Gill commission report has been available to the government as background advice ever since November, 1962 when it was tabled. It certainly found plenty wrong with the system. However, to date the government has done nothing at all to effect some of the most useful of the 45 listed recommendations and changes contained in the report of the commission.

Throughout the past year the minister has been travelling about the country promising further revisions and talking about higher benefits and expanded coverage. As early as February 8, 1967 the *Globe and Mail* reported: "Time Ripe For Increasing Benefits To Unemployed, Nicholson Says". I have a host of newspaper clippings but I will only refer to a few. In a clipping from the *Fredericton Gleaner* of May 20, 1966 we read the heading: "Now Is The Time". Another heading on a clipping from the *Globe and Mail* of August 22, 1967 reads: "Higher Jobless Benefits Delayed Until Early '68". In the light of such procrastination and lack of action it seems there is nothing else for members on this side

Review of Unemployment Insurance Act

of the house to do but to put forward their own motions to effect earlier changes, because certainly a revision of the act in more ways than my motion intends to effect is long overdue.

We are told that an interdepartmental committee is studying needed amendments. We would be very interested to see the proposed amendments that the committee intends to put forward. In fact there have really been no proper amendments to this act since 1959 at which time it was established that persons earning up to \$5,160 a year would be covered by the Unemployment Insurance Act and anyone earning over that figure would be excluded. It is clear to all of us in this house that wages have risen during the last eight year period, and in fact many people in the labour force have been excluded from the benefit group because of increasing salaries, not that salaries are increasing too much but because this limit is unrealistic. Therefore needed changes not only to raise the limit but to increase the benefits are long overdue.

There is some concern on the part of many Canadians about the manner in which increased benefits will result and also about the classes which will be included in the much talked of expanded coverage. I know that there is a rough justice in the basic principle that everyone pays, everyone benefits. So far as hospital insurance and various forms of medical insurance are concerned, we do operate on the principle that everyone pays, everyone collects. However, I think it is a very rough measure of justice if this principle is applied to unemployment insurance.

If we are to include almost two and a half million additional workers from professional groups such as civil servants, high executives in business and industry, bank presidents and perhaps even prime ministers and politicians, then it certainly seems that we will be including persons who will stand little chance of ever collecting from the unemployment insurance fund. I would make the statement that such professional groups as teachers, social workers and nurses are almost guaranteed continuous employment and therefore would never really be able to claim benefits under the act. Therefore I caution the government against expanding coverage to include those classes. I think that any group of persons or any individual earning a substantial salary would not sit back and be content with the rather meagre benefits possible under the insurance plan. So, as I said,