

Supply—Labour

called in on a certain day and are laid off on a certain day—they are given a small stamp. As is known, four small stamps, in the course of this contribution, place the contributor on the lower benefit scheme.

The submission which was made by this union or by its local branch to the minister, of which I have knowledge, was to the effect that if a change could be made in the act—and it would probably apply to other types of workers in Canada—to the effect that if 51 per cent of the higher stamps for the past 30-week period was used as a medium it would give them an opportunity then to receive the higher benefits. As I have pointed out, when they are working, as a result of their earnings they pay on the higher bracket but they do not receive the benefits on that rate scheme.

Last year a submission was also made to me by this same union with regard to the matter of an increase in the benefits paid to the contributor. I spoke at that time and without commenting on the act which is now before the House of Commons and is in committee, and in which an increase is proposed by the government—certainly not brought about by any advocacy on my part, but by the wisdom and the efficiency of the Minister of Labour and of this government, of course—I hope that as a result of the few words that I have said this evening on this matter, perhaps the same desired results will be obtained.

Mr. Carter: I want to mention briefly one or two points which slipped my mind when I had the floor a little while ago. First of all, I want to take one parting shot at those manufacturing firms in central Canada and remind them that every cent the poor fisherman is going to get from the unemployment insurance fund will come right back here into their own pockets because they have a protective market and we are their prisoners. Therefore I hope they will think twice before again objecting to benefits for the fishermen.

There are two other points which slipped my mind when I had the floor just now. The first one is this. It is my understanding that if an applicant sends in an application for regular benefits and if he has not qualified he must submit another application for seasonal benefits. I would ask the minister if something could not be done, particularly in the case of fishermen, so that only one application would be necessary.

The other point I wish to make concerns fishermen, particularly fishermen from Newfoundland who leave their homes and fish on ships sailing from mainland ports. These men are away from their homes for ten months out of the year, but on some occasions during the off season when the ship is under refit or for some other such reason they come home,

[Mr. MacEwan.]

and during that time they draw unemployment benefits. However, occasionally it happens that a trawler in a nearby port is short-handed, and a company applies to an employment office in St. John's, informing the officials that this fisherman is home. Under these circumstances the man has to leave home and take the work offered to him or be disqualified from benefit. It seems to me that some special provision should be made in the case of people who work away from their homes for long periods of time, and I ask the minister if he would give his attention to making some special provision to meet this type of case.

Mr. Tucker: The government intends to raise the contribution but fails to increase the benefits. In other words, the fishermen, the labourers and the workers will now be required to pay more of their meagre earnings for stamps to qualify them for the same amount of benefits. The new provision allowing a full claim for 52 weeks of benefit does not really mean much, as a claimant would only get value for the amount of stamps he has to his credit and fishermen and other workers barely get enough stamps each year to qualify for seasonal benefits, so this benefit is of no value to them or to the many. It will only benefit a few. Some of the benefits paid are ridiculously low, \$6 or \$8 a week. What can a person do on such an amount these days?

Section 46 (2) cuts off some of the benefits from the claimants. For example, when a claim expires at a full week the subsequent claim begins on a previous Sunday so eventually a claimant receives benefit for a full week. For example, a claim expires on Wednesday. A claim is put in for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. A subsequent claim begins on Sunday of that week, so later the man is paid for Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Thus he gets the benefit of the full week. Under this new amendment a claimant will not receive any benefit for Thursday, Friday and Saturday because his subsequent claim will commence only on the following Sunday, so he has no claim in existence for Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the week, whether or not his claim expired on Wednesday, so he loses benefits. This boils down to the fact that both claimants and employers have to pay more to the fund in order to get the same benefits out of it whereas the government is not contributing any more than it did formerly. The workers must pay all the time.

Many fishermen in Newfoundland are disturbed by changes in the unemployment insurance regulations providing for the compulsory deduction of 25 per cent from gross earnings before calculating earnings for