

Mr. CROLL: Those short-term people are a great minority, are they not, as compared to the great majority who appear to resent making a contribution which they are not likely to get back; is that not the situation?

The WITNESS: At the moment, Mr. Chairman, I think that is correct; in fact, I know it is. We do not know what the situation is going to be in the next five to ten years, however. All of you here can remember the days when the armed forces were reduced to an irreducible minimum, and a good many people were thrown out. Jobs were difficult to find, and there was no protection for that group which was discharged at that time. At the moment it would not appear that that is likely to happen, or that that situation would likely be repeated in the foreseeable future, but it could happen.

The CHAIRMAN: The minister is not a member of the committee, but he has indicated that he would be prepared to make some observations. Is it agreed that he be heard?

Hon. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Hon. Mr. LAPOINTE: Actually Mr. Chairman, I did not wish to make observations, but I did want an opportunity to question Mr. Anderson. I think my points have been more or less covered by the previous questions. What I had in mind was that the Veterans Benefit Act gave the unemployment insurance to members of the regular forces who were enlisted for not more than three years. In other words, if a member of the regular forces further re-enlisted after his three years, this privilege or benefit did not exist any more. Now, I cannot help thinking, as Mr. Gillis and Mr. Croll have pointed out, that the majority of the members of the armed forces who join the forces to make a career of it and who re-enlist after their three-year enlistment period is over—at least, I believe in the case of the army this is so, but the period of enlistment is longer in the navy and air force—

Mr. ANDERSON: Five years.

Hon. Mr. LAPOINTE: Yes, five years—that these people would be rather reluctant to contribute, because they intend to stay there and make a career of it. They are aware of the benefits they receive under the Defence Services Pension Act to which Mr. Bennett referred. Under the terms of that Act, after a certain number of years in the service, if they are discharged for any reason whatsoever, they will draw a pension to which they have contributed, and would probably not be called upon to draw any benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Act. I cannot help thinking that the majority of the regular armed forces would not want such a scheme because of the different conditions of service which exist there as compared to civilian employees. That is my personal opinion.

Mr. ANDERSON: I think what the minister has said is true. I think it is also true to say that no one who feels that he is in a permanent position wants to contribute to unemployment insurance benefits, but the reason the fund is there is because no one is certain he will be permanently employed. I do not know how far you want to extend this or how far you think it should be extended; it is a question and one that has certainly never been definitely decided in any quarter up to the present time. I believe the minister may have been suggesting that perhaps we could have this apply to the people who stay in only for the first three-year period, is that correct?

Hon. Mr. LAPOINTE: Either that, or a set term. I think the entire suggestion is worthy of consideration but I was thinking of some of the difficulties that might be in the way.

Mr. ANDERSON: I do not think it would be satisfactory but on the other hand it would not protect the group I mentioned in answering Mr. Croll's question; that situation arises where any large numbers are let out. They might be people who were only in for a short period of time and if that situation