

*Unemployment Insurance Act*

considered that would be a backward step. We heard all these arguments when the act was being set up, and I hope that some day we will have universal coverage under this act. That is our aim. I was very pleased with the committee when it finalized its report and, instead of moving to take the firemen out, recommended that the policemen across the country should be taken in. That of course is the intention of the act.

I should just like to say this to the minister on the matter of the reduction from 51 to 36 weeks. Looking at the country generally, I do not think that unemployment is getting any better. There is a little change seasonally, but in the basic industries where we have unemployment today it looks like a permanent proposition. We were reminded of this today when the hon. member for Inverness-Richmond asked the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys if he was aware of the fact 75 per cent of the total coal mining operations were now going on half time, and the minister stated that eight mines have been totally shut down through lack of markets. That unemployment is going to continue. We must begin to give consideration to the fact that sometime we will have to get around to the idea that unemployment insurance should be applicable as long as a man or woman is unemployed and that there should be no cut-off date anywhere. That is the intention of the act. It was always our conception of it. While we have experimented with it over the last 16 years and expanded it a little, bringing in more here and more there, we have either to find employment for people or to find a means whereby they are going to eat. We have to give this legislation a thorough examination.

Another controversial subject over the last few weeks was the fact that there was a regulation with respect to the guaranteed annual wage, to the effect that if it were established in an industry no unemployment insurance would apply and it would not be supplemented. It is supplemented in the United States. I might say that that regulation no longer exists because with the passing of this act the old regulations die and new regulations will have to be introduced. I would strongly urge the chief commissioner and the minister that when the new regulations are being set up, that regulation with respect to a guaranteed annual wage and its relationship to unemployment insurance should not be written in. It is not an issue in this country as yet; it may become an issue. But the guaranteed annual wage will not be established by legislation; it will be established by collective wage agreements in

plants. If you succeed in putting it in a plant at, say, Windsor or Toronto, it will develop from industry to industry and you can fix no formula under the Unemployment Insurance Act whereby you will or will not apply it. It is a matter of leaving it open.

If and when there is a guaranteed annual wage in this country, the departmental and parliamentary officials can sit in with the labour bodies and work out a feasible plan with respect to unemployment insurance. At the present time it is just a red rag shown to a bull, which serves no particular purpose. It is out now, and I would suggest it be left out. Mr. Chairman, I am not going to delay the bill. I am anxious to accommodate the minister so that we may be able to make the amendments where we think they should be made under the terms of the bill.

**Mr. Hahn:** I, too, can appreciate the desirability of keeping the debate to a minimum, in view of the trip the minister hopes to make to Europe. I hope therefore to keep my remarks to a minimum. I say that more particularly because of the excellent co-operation we received in the committee from the members of the department, as well as the minister in listening to our pleas and the amendments we would have him make in the bill. I think we are rather fortunate today that the election is over in this province, so that at least we shall be spared the charges that we are talking for election purposes at this time.

The interest in the country in the bill itself was manifest to a major degree by the number of requests we had for representations to be heard in the committee. Naturally enough, it was impossible to hear everyone, but those bodies that represented the larger groups either attended or presented briefs, and every consideration was given to them by the members of the committee. In respect to this matter, the very fact that there are some 14 amendments, as outlined in the *Votes and Proceedings*, changes in the act the government proposes to make, is indicative of the co-operation that the minister showed in listening to our pleas. The recommendations that we made, and which are to be found at page 690 of *Votes and Proceedings*, included among them the following:

Your committee recommends that the government consider the advisability of extending the Unemployment Insurance Act to cover

- (1) the following classes of fishermen:
  - (a) Those who work for wages; and
  - (b) Those who work in such other parts of the fishing industry as are amenable to coverage.

In this respect possibly what happened may not have been a precedent but at least it was an example of the co-operation that we