

most of which occurs in the winter months. In order to ease the burden of those persons who are out of work at that time supplementary benefit is paid.

**Hon. Mr. Roebuck:** Do I understand that supplementary benefit is paid at the same rate as the regular benefit?

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald:** At the present time the supplementary rates are less than the regular rates.

**Hon. Mr. Euler:** Does this bill bring them up to the regular rates?

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald:** Yes. Honourable senators will notice by the table in the explanatory notes to the bill that a person without a dependent receives supplementary benefit of \$12.90 per week, and a person with a dependent receives \$16.80. The table which appears in subsection 2 of section 1 of the bill indicates that under this measure a person without a dependent will receive a weekly supplementary benefit of \$17.10; and a person with a dependent, \$24. It is apparent that the bill would bring the supplementary payments to about the same amount as the regular payments.

The bill would also provide that a person who has not qualified for regular payments, and who under the present act would receive a minimum of 16 days' benefit, will now receive 60 days' benefit.

I think, honourable senators, that concisely explains the purpose of this bill. You will all agree, I am sure, that in the interests of those who are unemployed and who need the increased benefits which the bill would provide, it should be considered and passed by us today. As I have suggested, we can reserve our right to criticize the measure and to seek further information on the general unemployment question when the other bill comes before the house.

**Hon. Mr. Roebuck:** May I ask the honourable leader when the present rates came into effect?

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald:** The present supplementary rates have been in effect since 1950, but I would remind the honourable senator from Toronto-Trinity, who I know has shown great interest in this subject, that the regular rates were increased in 1952.

**Hon. Mr. Roebuck:** Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Burchill:** Has the honourable leader any information as to the approximate amount of money expended for supplementary benefits, and what will be expended at the proposed increased rate?

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald:** Honourable senators, I have in my hand a table which shows the

supplementary benefit, Classes 1 and 2, for the period January 1, 1950, to November 30, 1954, inclusive. It covers the payment of benefits, the number of persons qualified and the days paid. If my honourable friend from Northumberland (Hon. Mr. Burchill) or any other honourable senators would like to have this information, with leave of the house I would be pleased to place the table on *Hansard*.

Supplementary Benefit Classes 1 and 2  
January 1, 1950 to November 30, 1954.

Year Ending December 31	Expenditure Benefit	No. Persons Qualified	Days Paid
1950 .....	\$ 2,761,402	69,088	1,443,192
1951 .....	3,886,657	88,549	2,028,329
1952 .....	4,657,654	95,986	2,275,825
1953 .....	9,220,152	149,317	4,297,262
1954 (To November 30)	14,082,897	210,654	6,469,164
	<u>\$34,608,762</u>		

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** As I understand it, the present act provides for 16 days' supplementary benefit, and the bill now before us will increase that to 60 days?

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald:** Sixteen days was the minimum for those who had not qualified for regular payments.

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** I understand.

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald:** The bill would also increase the amount of the supplementary payments.

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** The rates would be increased for the two categories from, in round figures, \$12 to \$17, and \$16 to \$24?

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald:** Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** Honourable senators, I have no objection whatever to the bill; in fact, I do not know how some people live on the amounts they receive by way of unemployment insurance benefits. I do, however, have one observation which I should like to make at this time, and the opportunity will be open for me when the other bill comes before the house to discuss the matter in greater detail.

According to my understanding of the act, its original purpose was to provide unemployment relief benefits as required, and also to create a surplus fund to take care of periods of widespread unemployment if they should occur. For instance, in my own office we pay our contribution towards unemployment insurance every two weeks, as do the employees in the office, and it has always been my understanding, and I think that of the public generally, that by such contributions we were accumulating a fund to meet a major emergency. Now, the same thing was done in Great Britain, yet, when the great