

*Proposed Committee on Unemployment*

season in a much shorter time than was necessary a few years ago. Therefore we find that the camps are actually closed down.

The seasons of the year vary in different parts of the country. On Vancouver island the camps are closed down now because on the hills and mountains there is a heavy fall of snow. They will be opened again in the spring, only to be closed down in the summer when the fire hazard is high; but during the period the camps are open no great difficulty is presented in cutting sufficient logs, which can be sent down to the ocean and boomed and held ready for the mills, to maintain reasonably steady employment in the mills the season round. It is true, as the Acting Prime Minister says, that many of the men who are employed in the woods return to their homes. They have their small farms, and they are able to find some other employment during the seasons when the camps are closed.

But I should like to call attention to this fact—and it is a fact, as I know from personal experience—that it is the senior men who have those homes and who are able to find other employment. The youngster who has just gone into the woods, the young unmarried man, has not established that security which the older men have had. His wages in the woods are not as high as the experienced man's, and he has not had the opportunity to build up reserves of unemployment insurance. So frequently when the camps are shut down he finds that he is in very difficult circumstances. I do feel that special attention should be paid to these younger men who are working in the forest industries. Those are young lives that should be saved and not soured by being forced to move into queues for assistance at soup kitchens and so forth.

Then, when we come to the question of fish, conservation limits the catch. Nobody is going to quarrel with that. It is absolutely essential that there should be restrictions on the amount of British Columbia salmon which may be caught. These restrictions are the result of extensive international agreements. With them we have improvements in the equipment which the fisherman now has, equipment which in some instances helps to locate the shoals of fish, bigger vessels, and so on. When he spoke in Vancouver not very long ago the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Sinclair) said, as reported in the press, that the day of the small gill netter was over. That may be correct or not, but the trend is certainly to lead the industry into bigger vessels and better equipment than have been utilized before. Up to the present the gill netter has accounted for about two-thirds of the men engaged in the salmon fishing industry.

[Mr. Pearkes.]

Fishermen do not draw any unemployment insurance. That is owing very largely to the fact that their occupation is seasonal. If you were to pay them unemployment insurance for those seasons when they were not working it would be in the nature of a subsidy to that particular industry. Whether in the future something could be worked out to provide some special form of unemployment insurance for seasonal workers such as fishermen, I do not know; but I offer that as a possible suggestion to assist in unemployment in those particular industries.

I wish to say a word regarding the services. Men are now coming back from overseas, time-expired. They may have served their three years in the army or five years, we shall say, in the navy. Press reports of the last few days indicated that two battalions will be coming back from Korea very shortly. Approximately 50 per cent of the time-expired men take their discharge. They have done their period of service. Some feel that they would like to take on army service as a permanent career. Others feel that they have done their duty by serving for the period of their contract, and they take their discharge.

I should like to throw out the suggestion that some arrangement should be made whereby men are not released during these periods when there is the greatest seasonal unemployment. It seems to me it would not be very difficult for the services to provide some system of, shall we say, vocational training, to tide over that period when a man upon release will go out only to find that owing to this seasonal unemployment there is no prospect of finding a job.

I remember in pre-war days there were schemes under which during the last six months of their army service men were conditioned prior to re-entering civilian life. I am not at all certain that if discharges were to take place at times when there was considerable unemployment, would it not be well worth while considering some such scheme whereby men may be held in the services a little longer and be conditioned, while still in the armed services, to take their place in civilian life?

As far as the present situation is concerned, I feel it is too late for any immediate action to be taken. Despite the snowstorms at Ottawa, spring is just around the corner. Terrible as it may be to tell a man who is unemployed that he must still wait a few more weeks, at the same time there is some hope because snow melts on the hills and the camps will be opened up again. Unless the government has some steps in mind which will bring immediate relief to the present