

Unemployment Insurance Act

other workers in industry in this country. With that part of the brief I am entirely in agreement.

I agree with the hon. member for Cape Breton South that the time has come when many of these men who are seasonally unemployed and who cannot find work in the winter months should receive some benefit. I do not care whether it is in the form of unemployment insurance or in the form of some other insurance, some means must be found whereby fishermen who cannot fish in the winter and who cannot find other gainful employment will receive some benefit to take care of their needs for at least two or three months in the year.

There are many men in my riding who have given up fishing and who come up to the great lakes to get employment on the boats. They are very good men and they are glad to have them. They generally work from March to about the end of November after which they draw unemployment insurance. Yet there are fishermen in the same community who are still carrying on fishing but who cannot fish during the winter. They are going to give up their fishing and go up to the great lakes to get employment on the boats there. It is conditions such as these that are causing great dissatisfaction among the fishermen.

I suggest to the minister that he continue the committee which is making a study of this matter. All ideas should be amalgamated. The government should not take a negative attitude and say it cannot be done; they should take a positive attitude and say that it can and will be done.

At one o'clock the committee took recess.

The committee resumed at 2.30 p.m.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Chairman, I notice that the members who have spoken in the debate so far have expressed good wishes to the minister for his trip overseas, but I do not think any of them expressed any hope that he might return. So I shall do that at this stage.

Mr. Gregg: Thank you very much.

Mr. Churchill: There are some members on the other side whom we could spare very readily, but I shall not proceed to name them. This unemployment insurance measure is of great importance. The bill before us represents on the part of the draftsmen a very considerable effort. Sitting on the committee and going through it section by section, we were able to observe the exacting work that was required of the draftsmen

[Mr. Stick.]

to gain the result that they achieved. I would not say that all the sections are as clearly stated as some of us would like to see, but nevertheless it is only right to recognize the fact that the draftsmen working on this bill performed a good piece of work in a difficult type of effort.

We have had mention made by others today that in view of the fact that the committee considered the bill at some length there is no need to spend much time on it here in the house. With that I am not in agreement, because I think it is important for members who are on the committee to draw to the attention of other members the matters that appeared in committee to be of most concern. Some have said that they would like to expedite the passage of this bill in order that the minister can get away. I have no particular sympathy with him in that regard. If he has to go, that is just the luck of us all. The business of the house could have been arranged so that we could have had this bill yesterday, and in any case we have in the Minister of National Health and Welfare a satisfactory substitute to carry on the work. I believe it is important to let the members of the house know that, although the committee agreed with most of the bill, nevertheless they were not satisfied with some of the sections.

Representations were made to the committee and by committee members with respect to extending the benefits of unemployment insurance to other classes of people, in addition to the extensions already suggested by the commission and discussed at some length in the house earlier and during the course of the committee proceedings. The committee did consider the question of the agricultural labourer; they considered the difficult problem in connection with those fishermen who are not self-employed; they dealt with the question of the firemen who were asking to be excluded from contributing to the act; and they dealt at some length with the problem confronting married women, and with this other problem of reducing the 51 weeks of benefit to 30. It would be wrong to assume that there was unanimity of agreement on all these points in the committee. Although the report has been presented, it is only right to inform the house that the committee was not unanimous with regard to everything that happened in the course of the proceedings. Attempts were made here and there to make amendments to the act, of which some were accepted and others rejected.

Some praise has been offered to the unemployment insurance commission by other speakers. I consider the commission competent. We were pleased to have their assistance