

Unemployment Insurance Act

winter should be about the same as last winter then the total amount paid out this winter in supplementary benefits will be in the vicinity of \$22 million, or an additional \$10 million over last winter.

The hon. member for New Westminster referred to this as being charity. I protest that it is not charity at all. As two other speakers have pointed out since, this plan was devised as an insurance plan just like fire or automobile insurance. The good risks pay for the poor risks. The benefits accruing to the insured are legitimate benefits and in no sense are they charity or handouts.

The hon. member for Quebec West referred to the official figures on unemployed workers as being those in receipt of benefits. I am sure he has made an error there. The official figures quoted by the bureau of statistics and the Department of Labour do not refer to total numbers in receipt of benefits.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has asked for assurance that there is nothing in the bill except the two items mentioned in the resolution. I can assure him that in the bill which will be distributed shortly there is nothing of any substance that is not indicated in the resolution. There will be minor things such as the date of proclamation and the probable dropping of a spent clause, but there is nothing of any substance in the bill except these two matters.

Mr. Knowles: No jokers?

Mr. Harris: There never is in anything the government does.

Mr. Knowles: Oh, oh.

Mr. Gregg: He also referred to the fact that he would like to have more information regarding what I had discussed last year on seasonal unemployment. I will grant that it is related to this bill in that it is hoped that it might work for greater stability amongst wage earners during the winter months. I can assure him that, following that report, in my opinion very good progress—even though it may be considered as modest—has been made. I am planning to bring in that report at an earlier period during another debate rather than during this one.

The hon. member for Comox-Alberni suggested the extension of the duration of the whole period. That matter was mentioned also by the hon. member for Ontario. It is difficult to make it apply to every region. I think there must be standardization. I should like to point out that this question was given the most exhaustive study, but it is not incorporated in this legislation. The matter of the soundness of the fund, of course, enters

[Mr. Gregg.]

into it. At any rate, for the purpose of this bill we are sticking to the period from January 1 to April 15.

The hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich suggested the point which he brings up from time to time with regard to fishermen and near-fishermen. While the general revision or planning has been under way, I can assure him that study of the matter affecting fishermen proper has been continuing with good hope that some results might accrue from it. I think I know what he means by near-fishermen; and that is something that is being studied as a side issue by the commission.

As to the hon. member for Macleod, I should like to congratulate him as one of the pioneers, who was here when this extremely useful act came into being. It has served and is serving a useful purpose. I should like to reassure him, as far as we can do so, that the fund is, in our opinion, still actuarially sound. It is our intention to keep it so. The figures he wants are readily available. I did not think that for this bill it might be necessary to put them on record. If other hon. members would like to have them, when the bill comes up for second reading or in committee after second reading I shall be glad to present them. In any case, the figures up to the end of the fiscal year 1954 are available and also the interim figures since then.

There is just one other point I wish to mention. It is something which I forgot to include in my first remarks. This bill has been submitted to the unemployment insurance advisory committee which is provided for under the act, and has been approved by them. Very shortly, of course, the larger bill will also be submitted to them.

Resolution reported, read the second time and concurred in.

Mr. Gregg thereupon moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 6, to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY**

The house resumed, from Monday, January 10, consideration of the motion of Mr. Yves Leduc (Verdun) for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Rowe, and the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Coldwell.

Mr. S. R. Balcom (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I feel highly honoured in following so closely the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent), the