

*Unemployment Insurance Act*

possible for working people and others as well to get sufficient purchasing power, by some means or other, so that they are able to buy the goods we are making now but cannot sell and thus increase employment and do away with the necessity for these so-called supplementary payments.

We agree that under the circumstances there is every reason to pass this bill with haste so that these people may enjoy the further supplementary payments, particularly those who have already exhausted their regular unemployment insurance payments, because they must be in a terrible position. But we say also that this should be a reminder to everyone, and particularly to the supporters of the government, that the time has come—and through this legislation the government recognizes it—when we must provide policies which are going to create jobs and thus increase purchasing power for the people who need it, and that will solve our problem. We would hope then that there would not be the necessity on another occasion for these so-called supplementary benefits. We support this legislation and we shall be glad to see the amendments which the government intends to bring down to the Unemployment Insurance Act which will still further assist the workers of this country.

**Mr. McIvor:** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway that, as we have not this bill before us, we cannot discuss it as well as we might. I do not think we should enter into a general discussion on unemployment insurance. That is something that will come on later. Neither should we discuss the big question of unemployment now. We should send this bill to the committee on industrial relations at once. The committee then will discuss it thoroughly. Then when it comes back to us we can speak intelligently.

*(Translation):*

**Mr. Dufresne:** Mr. Speaker, we have noted with real gratification the unanimous approval which greeted the proposal made to us yesterday evening with a view to suspending the debate on the address today in order to discuss the matter now before the house. This satisfaction is not only felt here, by the members of this honourable house, but is certainly shared by the working people of this country. It must after all be admitted that for many years now our people

[Mr. Johnston (Bow River).]

have been subjected to what I might call the canker of seasonal or regional unemployment. Things had reached such a point that in the fall of each year and throughout a long winter stretching well into spring, thousands upon thousands of people were left without employment, of which several thousand again were even deprived of those unemployment insurance benefits to which they had nevertheless contributed, not having worked long enough during the summer to earn a right to them.

Members from this side of the house, as well as representatives of every labour union in this country, have asked that the government set this matter right. But the government have never deigned to listen to these representations. A while ago we were shown figures which, in this very house, were said to be exaggerated. And yet these figures are provided by the government themselves since now, as always, the only ones used are those that come from official sources. Now the unemployment figures given by the government are taken from the reports made to them by the various unemployment insurance offices and include only those people receiving benefits, whereas, in most cases, in the different parts of this country, we know that thousands more are not in a position to enjoy these benefits.

In the constituency which I have the honour to represent, and which is essentially a working class district, we have a certain type of worker known as a labourer. For a number of years, these labourers have been unable to find the work necessary to enable them to support themselves and their families except in the case of a few during the summer. It means then that, at the moment of leaving their work, these people suddenly find themselves in the most pressing need, not having earned enough money to accumulate some savings.

I remember that last year, in this very house, I put a question to the hon. Minister of Labour (Mr. Gregg). I asked him if it would not be possible to do something immediately for the 22,000 people who were then jobless in the Quebec area. It was suggested that the figures I had quoted were highly exaggerated. However, it appears that the following week statistics showed the number of jobless to be smaller by a few hundred only, and these statistics were not for the whole Quebec district but for the cities of Quebec and Levis only.