

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Murchison.

Mr. MURCHISON: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister and hon. members, Mr. Gregg referred to the passing of the regulations governing the coverage of fishermen. I should point out to you that the regulations that have been submitted to the governor in council concern only the first part of the scheme, namely the coverage of fishermen and the contributions. There is still another part of the regulations to be submitted, and that part has to do with the benefit side of the picture. That is why, Mr. Chairman, it would be preferable if we stayed away from the draft regulation and referred to this narrative, that is written in layman's language. With your permission, I will read it. The narrative to which I have referred is as follows:

This plan proposes a scheme for bringing fishermen under unemployment insurance in such a way that so far as possible there will be integration of all their contributions made in respect both of fishing and other insurable employment. However, a considerable number of special rules are needed to accomplish this and to overcome the very difficult problems that complete integration presents.

This plan has been devised and submitted to the commission by the inter-departmental committee, established by cabinet directive of 9 August, 1956. In formulating the suggested rules, the committee so far as possible has tried to apply the ordinary unemployment insurance scheme to fishermen. This has not been an easy task, however, because the typical employment relationship in fishing is different from what exists in other insured employments.

Mr. HAHN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I do not wish to interfere with Mr. Murchison's reading of this, but may I suggest that he may be allowed to sit down while he is reading the brief, if he so wishes.

Mr. MURCHISON: Thank you.

To continue:

The majority of fishermen are not wage earners but sharesmen or lone workers, so that the ordinary employer-employee relationship is lacking in most cases. In general the decision to fish or not to fish at a particular time is in part at least made by the insured person himself. Earnings depend upon results and market prices and are therefore to some extent fortuitous. It is for reasons of this kind that the Committee has been led to propose some rules which seem to contravene the ordinary principles that govern unemployment insurance; for example, that the buyer of fish is the "employer" and must therefore make contributions although he does not usually exercise control over the fisherman; that generally fishermen are not considered unemployed from 16 April to 31 December of each year but are considered unemployed from 1 January to mid-April; that the activity of fishing during the off-season does not imply non-availability for employment.

That will be explained later on.

And to continue:

To avoid serious anomalies, the usual approach to unemployment insurance has had to be changed. The following are the main respects in which the committee suggests that the ordinary rules should be varied in order to apply the scheme to fishing in such a way that fishing contributions can be used in conjunction with other contributions.

(1) Subject to a few minor exceptions which are described below under "Coverage", all fishermen, irrespective of whether they are wage earners, sharesmen or lone workers, will be insured. A universal basis of coverage is considered necessary because of the peculiar conditions of the fishing industry. Exceptions from coverage have been made only