employed person, 12 cents. The third class covers those earning from $7.50 a week to less than $9.60 a week. The next class covers those from $9.60 to $12, and so on up to those earning $38.50 a week or $2,000 a year. This maximum was later raised.

No benefits are paid for those who earn under 90 cents a day. The next class receive a benefit of $4.08 for a single person and $4.80 for a person with dependents; these benefits are based on earnings between $5.40 and $7.50 per week. It is obvious that if we are to appreciably increase the benefits they will become larger than the earnings on which they are based. I do not think that is practicable. The thing to do is to increase wages, and then if a person happens to be unemployed his benefits will be increased accordingly. I am not objecting to an increase in the benefits, but I do want to show that you cannot increase the benefits very much without giving the worker a higher remuneration in benefits when unemployed than he is receiving in wages while working. Obviously there would be no reason in the world why he should work under such circumstances.

As I said earlier, during the last year a great many complaints have been made to me in connection with the administration of the act. I realize the handicaps under which the unemployment insurance commission and the minister have been working. The minister is practically the commission at the present time, because there is only a chief commissioner. As I said before, this is a new field of administration, and that in itself would make the administration difficult. The commissioners who were appointed had had no previous experience with legislation of this kind. The minister and the commission had to contend not only with inexperienced staff but also with inexperienced administrators. Until we get over this particular phase, while criticism might be popular I am inclined not to engage in it at the moment.

Let me again draw the attention of the minister and the house to the desirability of referring this bill to the standing committee on industrial relations. The bill affects a large number of workers, and an opportunity should be given to their representatives, to the representatives of organized labour particularly, to make representations as to the shortcomings or otherwise of the act. The employers also should have an opportunity to appear again before a committee.

I had the privilege of being a member of the special committee to which the bill was referred in 1940 when it was introduced in this house as a new measure. A large number of representations were made at that time, and I am convinced, now that five years have passed, that we should again hear from those who are affected by the act as to what they think of it, how they think it can be improved, and so on. I urge as strongly as I possibly can that when this bill has received second reading the minister move that it be referred to that standing committee. If it is not referred to the committee it may not be possible to have second reading of the bill to-day, because of the short time we have had to examine the bill. I was fortunate in getting a copy of it last night, but until about one o'clock or half-past one this afternoon most hon. members, at least those of my group, had not seen it. We should like to have more time to study it. If, however, my suggestion finds favour with the minister, perhaps we could let the bill have second reading without extended debate.

Mr. DAVID A. CROLL (Spadina): As one who for some years was responsible for the employment offices in the province of Ontario when there was very little employment, I am not likely to be given to much criticism to-day, but the minister said he wanted a little, so I shall try to provide it.

The hon. member for Vancouver East said that unemployment insurance is not new. I agree with him but as we know the act, it is almost in its infancy in this country. But the idea that unemployment is an insurable risk was given official sanction in England back in 1911, and it has developed there and on the continent with the result that to-day we profit from their experience. Canada is able to benefit to some extent from the field work which has been done in other countries.

The unemployment insurance commission, in adapting to Canadian conditions the theories which have been developed, has done an admirable job. I do not expect there will be any criticism of the commission or of the act. As a matter of fact we who were away from this country for several years were glad to know that in 1940 the house took the time to place this act upon the books, and in 1943 to improve it. It indicates that hon. members of that day were thinking about us and laying well the cornerstone of the unemployment insurance structure. I think this is a great social measure, and I fully agree with what the minister said about the present administration of the act. All of us are familiar with the workings of it.

It should be made clear, however, that the first purpose of the act is to find work for those who have been thrown out of employment, whether because of labour turnover, of seasonal unemployment, or of the vagaries