

9-2-44

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT
By Congressman Everett M. Dirksen
16th (Ill) District.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FOR VETERANS.

For a long time, experts and statisticians have attempted to estimate the number of unemployed persons there will be when the war is over and the men in service and those working in defense plants have been demobilized and return to their permanent places of residence. Estimates range from 5 million to 20 million. About it all there is a tinge of defeatism as if this nation might fold up for the duration of the peace. Any figure is a sheer guess. There will be no way of knowing until youngsters now working have returned to school, senior citizens who have come out of retirement return to their leisure, housewives return to their homes, persons with businesses have resumed their business life and industry has begun absorbing all manner of people to meet their needs. It is of course fair to assume that in the transition from war to peace, there will be that period of lag and adjustment which will necessarily cause some unemployment. Under the various unemployment compensation laws of the states, provision has already been made to make payments to civilians who are unemployed. To make certain that adequate provision will be made for returning veterans, Congress included in the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, a title under which readjustment allowances are made to unemployed veterans. This is in addition to educational opportunities, loans to buy homes, farms and businesses, and hospitalization benefits. In previous issues of the Congressional Front, these benefits have been analyzed in some detail. In this issue we set out the basic provisions of the Act which deal with readjustment allowances.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS.

Any person who (1) served in active service between Sept. 16, 1940 and the end of the war, (2) who has not been dishonorably discharged, (3) who has served 90 days or more, (4) or who was discharged for a service-connected disability if his service was less than 90 days, is eligible for such benefit payments.

QUALIFICATIONS.

A person who files a claim for unemployment benefits must (1) reside in the United States at the time his claim is filed, (2) be completely unemployed, (3) or if partially unemployed, his wages must be less than \$23 per week, (4) must be registered with a public employment office for work, (5) must report regularly to such office as provided by the regulations of such office unless he is ill or disabled, (6) must be physically able to work, (7) must be available for suitable work.

AMOUNT OF BENEFIT ALLOWANCE

In general, the unemployed veteran is entitled to benefits at the rates of \$20 per week less whatever wages he may have received in any work week over \$3. In other words if he received any wages over and above \$3 in any week, that amount would be deducted from the \$20 allowance. Also if he receives an allowance from some other source such as a state or federal or private benefit other than a pension or disability compensation, that amount would also be deducted. In the case of a veteran who may have been self-employed such as a professional man or in some trade or business and his earnings are less than \$100 per month, he can file a claim for the difference between \$100 a month and the amount of his actual earnings.

HOW LONG CAN VETERAN DRAW BENEFITS.

The veteran can draw benefits for a period of not to exceed 52 weeks in a period of time which begins on September 25, 1944 and runs two years after his discharge or the end of the war, whichever date is later. Suppose he was discharged on Jan. 1, 1945. He could apply for benefits

until Jan. 1, 1947. If however the war ended on March 1, 1945, he could claim not over 52 weeks of benefit payments as a maximum. The exact number of weeks however would be determined by his military service, namely 4 weeks of benefits for each month in the service or major fraction of a month. Suppose the veteran served 10 months and 24 days. The 24 days would count as a month making 11 months of service. With 4 weeks of benefits available for each month of service, the veteran could IF HE WERE UNEMPLOYED THAT LONG draw unemployment compensation for 44 weeks in a two year period.

DISQUALIFICATIONS.

He would be disqualified from drawing such benefits for any given week or period of weeks if (1) he leaves a suitable job voluntarily and without good cause, (2) if he is fired or suspended for misconduct in the course of his work, (3) if without good cause he fails to apply for a job to which he was referred by a public employment office, (4) if he fails to take a suitable job that is offered to him, (5) if he fails to attend a free training course to fit him for a job or (6) if he is jobless because of a strike or labor dispute in which he is taking part. NOTE. It should be noted that he does not have to take a job which was made vacant as a result of a strike or lock-out nor does he have to take a job where the pay, hours and conditions are substantially less favorable than those which prevail for similar work in that locality.