

introduced for second reading in the House. In the first area which will be amended, reference is made to the elimination of iniquities and complexities in the current legislation. The definition of the word iniquity in the dictionary is somewhat short, but quite clear:

INIQUITY: Lack of justice.

So, the government was aware at that time of the many cases of injustice in the administration of the act and regulations.

● (1430)

I am surprised to note that the minister who realizes the cases of extreme injustice resulting from such a complicated legislation has provided as only improvement some amendments on a few important matters, I agree, but which are far from enough. It must be kept in mind that there are still in Bill C-69 provisions which can be considered as cases of extreme injustice. For example, the abolition of benefits, that is making persons of 65 ineligible is an extreme injustice.

The procedures to be followed by individuals who have to quit their job because of illness have not been amended so as to prevent the petty annoyances of officials about medical certificates. Nevertheless, it is while ill that a person without income needs attention and understanding. Medical certificates will still have to go from the local to the main offices for control purposes, while the person who is ill and without income will have to wait weeks and months before receiving benefits delayed by red tape. These, Mr. Speaker, are cases of extreme injustice that would not occur if this legislation is not amended.

I could give many examples to prove inconsistencies in the administration of the act and regulations concerning the delays of benefit payments in case of illness. One person had to go to a hospital 100 miles away from home; the family physician's certificate is not enough, the specialist who treated the patient must submit a certificate or still the patient has to be examined by an independent doctor chosen by the Commission. Very often, the latter does not want to give such a certificate; he waits for the specialist's file. Add to that the delays caused by the postal strike and other strikes in the public service, and we have an idea of the situation of a sick person without income who has to wait for benefits that do not come.

Bill C-69 provides that in case of illness, a person who has paid enough contributions may renew an application for claim. However, these amendments will again involve a great deal of red tape.

The moment an act states that benefits become payable when someone has to quit work because of illness, if we really want to do away with the flagrant injustices which have already been noted, the act must be ridden of red tape formalities which prevent payment in most cases, the few needless calculations of ten weeks' insurable employment during the twenty weeks immediately preceding the thirtieth week. All such formalities should be dropped when it comes to maternity benefits; we ought to remember that the date of birth is never definite and that IUC officials should never render decisions resting on probabilities.

As for ineligibility after four consecutive weeks during which benefits are not payable for every insignificant

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reason imaginable—I have in mind sections 33(3) and 36(3) of the act—I stress that such excessive injustice penalizes even the applicant who has managed to find temporary work. But that is nonsense. The fact is that we did not refer to that and Bill C-69 does not account for that complexity, that excessive injustice. As I said, for all sorts of reasons, including the four weeks' ineligibility, the claim year is back to square one and the claimant cannot apply for benefits. Nothing has been corrected in Bill C-69. Here is a relevant example which highlights the stupidities inherent in the system.

The commission advises a claimant on January 14, 1974 that a disentitlement period set from November 18, 1973 to January 5, 1974 is terminated. However, by another letter dated February 7, 1974, he is again advised that since his disentitlement period was in effect during the re-established benefit and extended benefit periods, his benefit period is terminated. Even if the commission recognizes that benefits are now available, there is no benefit payable since January 6, 1974. It is easy to see the trick. The disentitlement period is made to last till the re-established benefit period, and then the claimant is advised that he is not entitled to payments according to sections 33(3) and 36(3) of the act.

This is an example of sadism, and there are many like that, whose authors are the technocrats who have elaborated the act in complicity with the public servants who seem to enjoy enforcing it.

Last spring, a group of 123 workers from the Moto-Ski plant, today transformed and headed by Bombardier Transport Ltd, who had been laid off temporarily, were called back to work by plant management. They worked for four or five weeks, then, having been laid off again, made new claims for unemployment insurance. Not one of them was considered eligible. The workers were punished for having agreed to work four weeks for their former employer. Still, nothing had been changed in the act in that regard.

The same thing applies in the case of farmers who are paid a subsidy for keeping their animals. That makes no sense: subsidies are no income. The farmers have animals they cannot sell, the government subsidizes them for the winter. The employees of the commission then say the farmer gets an income, saying the subsidies represent 50 per cent of their income, and reduce the unemployment insurance proportionately or pay no insurance at all. But no changes are made in Bill C-69 in this regard. Yet, we are asked to pass it gaily, happy about it. That is impossible. If the bill is passed by the majority, aware of that or not, it is not fault of mine. But as far as I am concerned, I say Bill C-69 does not include the changes or improvements required by the act of 1971. That is why I am opposed to passing this bill which is not acceptable in its present form.

In this regard, I have another example of stupidity in the application of the act and its rules. A claimant submits his request at the end of November 1972. After four weeks, he gets insurance with the usual delay. In July 1973, he is advised that he is no longer eligible. In August, he is offered a job at Cowansville, but he lives at Notre-Dame, in Témiscouata, some distance away from Cowansville. On