

Unemployment Insurance Commission is good. However, it is the law that is too complicated, and that is what we would want to have changed, and if most citizens, members of parliament better understood the situation of the unemployed, the hardships he goes through because of the complications resulting from a situation that he did not contribute to create, I am convinced that legislation could not be accepted without amendments. I would amend it anyway.

● (1550)

I still have much to say on that subject and I expect to continue. I shall not exaggerate as this House was kind enough to give me a few minutes more but to conclude I shall quote from the decision of the umpire.

We must establish if the claimant was available for work according to section 25(a) of the legislation.

And this was not in my area, but in the Montreal area.

Lets us note what the umpire said:

In its majority decision, the arbitration board noted that in most places where an application was made, experience was required.

She had looked for employment but the employers had asked if she had some experience related to the job. As she did not have enough experience, she was disqualified. That's all. But the umpire realized the absurdity of the situation and tried to find a solution. He added and I quote:

I am convinced that it is absurd to ask a claimant to look for employment and then to hold against her the fact that she was refused employment because of her lack of experience. This line of argument on the part of the board reveals a more serious lack: the lack of basic justice.

And we should note that the words of the umpire applied to all those who studied the file of the claimant. It was studied by civil servants and then by members of the arbitration board. As I could see myself, many decisions of the arbitration board are made in advance. It might be audacious to say this, but I think it is true. The matter is studied before the claimant appears before the board and their decision is already made. He did not make enough efforts, he did not take the necessary steps and then they make a decision that cause the unemployed to suffer and they sow the seeds of discontentment and revolution in Canada. You cannot keep people in poverty that long. This government will have to find some other solution.

**An hon. Member:** That is true!

**Mr. Dionne (Kamouraska):** I will end my statement on that particular item by quoting, since that has become as widespread as the difficulties of the Unemployment Insurance Commission, an editorial of November 4 1974 on CJRC entitled, quote:

"UIC-no bargain! . . ."

We have already on some occasions underlined the almost overall lack of efficiency in the UIC throughout Canada.

When I deal with another item, I will quote certain situations which occurred in Chandler, in the Montreal area, in the Northwest Territories, and I will have positive proof to give. The quotation goes on:

### *Unemployment Insurance Act*

In a previous editorial, we dealt with the lack of understanding and irresponsibility of a number of officers in the UIC as well as the arbitrary rulings they make more often than other, thus crushing the rights of unemployed workers who become the actual slaves of that plan. . . which in fact is theirs! You will remember a few weeks ago we mentioned a confidential, internal document of the Unemployment Insurance Commission which said that it was none of civil servants' business to tell people concerned when it was time to file a benefit claim or urge them to do so. . . or to inform them of their possible entitlement to benefit.

Good! That may be clever, but unfortunately this situation has been going on for too long. In that respect, a guideline will have to be sent out to all employees of the UIC.

**An hon. Member:** It is still going on.

**Mr. Dionne (Kamouraska):**

The document also says that the claimant who pleads ignorance of the provisions of the act and the ensuing duties and obligations cannot have good excuse for his negligence. We are treating people as society's garbage when unfortunately they happen to be unemployed. They also think that the hundreds of thousands of unemployed in Canada should be experienced parliamentarians fully conversant with the intricacies of such legislation as the Unemployment Insurance Act.

But here is something else. A document prepared by the CNTU indicates that almost \$36 million have been overpaid by the commission during 1973, due to mistakes on its part. And that because very few claimants know the duration of their benefit period and generally they are left unaware of their rights and obligations. As a result of its bad administration, the commission requires all claimants to return over-payments. It is a harassment policy for which they are not responsible at all, but for which they suffer the consequences.

Certainly, there is something wrong in the Unemployment Insurance Commission and we must clean the place to put an end to such situations. The faster the better!

And today, they try to proceed quickly. They would like this bill to be passed as quickly as possible. Indeed a number of members are as much in a hurry to leave on holidays as I am. But the Unemployment Insurance Act is not suitable for Canadians because it is too complicated and we must amend it. And I hope that those who have some responsibilities and who take to heart the well-being of our workers who are facing problems because the administration does not give them the opportunity to work, will be prepared to stay here as long as the act will not be amended.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)):** All those in favour of the said motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. Members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. Members:** Nay.