

of Labour (Mr. Caccia) making an interjection in the middle of my presentation to this chamber. That interjection is very simple. He said: "Nonsense, sheer nonsense". That is what the Minister of Labour said in this chamber on that day. That interjection was in response to a part of my presentation to this chamber in which I was indicating some of the statistics available to the public related to the social service costs and health costs of massive lay-offs.

In committee I brought to the attention of the Minister of Labour the fact that the statistics I was using on that occasion had come from the Carrothers report. That report, mentioned just a few minutes ago by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Yanakis), underlies the piece of legislation which we are exploring here today. It behooves me to take a minute or two to read from page 39 of that report so that the public record shows clearly and unequivocally what is contained in at least one page of that report.

Quoting from that report, they tell us that when unemployment goes up 1.4 per cent—and we have seen that kind of rise in Canada in the last year—there is an increase in suicides of 5.7 per cent. Admissions to mental hospitals increase 4.7 per cent for each 1.4 rise in the unemployment rate. Admissions to prisons go up 5.6 per cent with that same rise in unemployment. There is a rise in homicides or murders of 8 per cent for every 1.4 per cent rise in unemployment. The mortality rate as a result of cirrhosis of the liver goes up 2.7 per cent, and the mortality rate as a result of cardiovascular renal disease will go up 2.7 per cent. The total mortality rate on average will go up 2.7 per cent from a 1.4 per cent increase in unemployment.

If those are the figures which we can expect to find in a nation, these rises of 3 per cent to 8 per cent from some of the indicators of social stress and distress, we will find the same, only magnified, in those communities which experience sudden massive lay-offs.

If the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce were here to listen to this debate, or if he takes the time to read *Hansard*, or if he has read his local newspapers in the city of Windsor where there have been so many unfortunate Canadians laid off in the automobile plants, he would find that these effects are real and significant. They not only cause harm to people, but lead to increased mortality rates. More people die in those kinds of circumstances than would normally die if those circumstances were not present.

The importance of that in this piece of legislation before us lies in what the legislation does not deal with. As we look at the legislation, there are two principles which are enunciated. One deals with the fact that there shall be benefits for designated people who have been laid off. These benefits shall be of a financial nature. I guess it is easiest to think of them as an early retirement. There shall be for older workers some kind of security provided. That is a step forward.

The victims of government policy and an economy which is not allowed to perform the way it should by a government that does not seem to know what it is doing or the harm it is causing should have something from society on which to fall

Labour Adjustment Benefits

back in order that they can buy adequate food, have adequate shelter and live a life of dignity.

I do not think any member of this chamber could seriously argue with the principle of this bill. It is a valid principle, one which I hope all members will support. If we had seen a bill dealing with a desire to help in that way, pure and simple, I suspect it would have had rather quick passage in this chamber and in committee. The witnesses we heard did not quarrel with the need for Canadian society to help these kinds of victims.

Instead, we got a different kind of omnibus bill. We have provisions in this bill which we cannot separate. Members of this chamber will have to vote on both principles, and we only get one vote. It is the second principle which causes me difficulty. It is the second principle on which we heard a great deal of testimony.

In this country today there are in excess of one million people unemployed. We have been told by Statistics Canada that over the last year 400,000 people have been lost to the work force. They have given up looking for work. They know there is no work to be found in their communities.

In summary, we have skilled, caring Canadians who are not allowed to make a contribution to society because we do not have an economic system in place which encourages their participation. If you say to yourself with a great deal of clarity that what this country needs is a bigger pie with more jobs, more opportunity for young, old and middle-aged people, and you look at the first part of Bill C-78 which talks about the responsibility of employers in relation to lay-offs, you have to ask yourself some questions.

Whether you are a labour union leader, a member of this chamber, employed by a business subjected to lay-offs or an employer, you have to ask yourself whether there is a cost involved if society adopts this bill. The answer should come very quickly. Yes, there is a cost involved. You then have to ask yourself who pays the cost. That is where it starts to become a little unglued, a little less clear than it might be. The early retirement benefits or labour adjustment benefits are to be picked up in large part in the long term by society in general. But in the short term, a specific employer must give notice and pay full salary for a period of time, be it ten, 16 or 20 weeks. Therefore, it must be considered by that employer as a cost of doing business.

● (1750)

This might sound reasonable, as it is in many cases, but it also has a down side. The minister said in committee that he did not care or was not concerned about this. I was disturbed even more when he said that. This down side can be illustrated within the following context: ask yourself if there is any employer or owner of a business who would willingly lay off employees rather than expanding his business and hiring new employees. The reason a businessman can expand is because his business is strong and whatever he produces is in demand and being used by society. As his commodities become more popular, he has to produce more and therefore hire more people to make these items. This is what the business climate