

I say shame to that, Mr. Speaker. Look at the minister over there—his conscience must bother him.

Mr. Stanfield: It should.

Mr. Alexander: If it does not, it should. These people have made a magnificent contribution to the development of this country.

Mr. Broadbent: The minister?

Mr. Stanfield: Oh, no!

Mr. Alexander: As a result of it many of us are either standing at this particular instance, or sitting. This minister wants to cut them off—

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Alexander:—send them out to pasture.

An hon. Member: Callous.

Mr. Alexander: I do not know how the minister can sit there and smile.

An hon. Member: That's easy; he's a Liberal.

Mr. Alexander: I have made my point with respect to this matter. I think it is wrong, unjust, callous—

An hon. Member: Cruel.

Mr. Alexander: That is another good adjective—cruel. There is no compassion shown for our senior citizens who have done so much for our country. As I said before, the government wants to give prisoners who are incarcerated some sort of relief and bring them into the unemployment insurance picture after they are discharged from jail or the penitentiary.

An hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I hear the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Cullen). The government seems to have more compassion for those who are incarcerated than for those who are abiding by the law. I do not understand that, but I will not let the minister distract me from what I want to bring home to the government. Look at the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang). He has his problems and I do not want him to disturb me because I do not want to disturb him. He has problems with Skyshops, with Air Canada, with air traffic controllers—I am glad he interjected. Let me tell him that it can never be said that we on this side are not concerned about safety. I will stop there and get back to my original point, Mr. Speaker.

The minister is intelligent but it is unfortunate that his intelligence does not show with respect to his portfolio.

An hon. Member: He is sitting on it.

Mr. Alexander: I told the minister what I thought of this particular clause. He has played Scrooge for our senior citizens, and Santa Claus for the prisoners. We will not accept that attitude, and I know that the hon. member for Dauphin (Mr. Ritchie) will have more to say about this. Our senior citizens have every right in the work force, not

Unemployment Insurance Act

because they enjoy work or that it is a hobby but because they have responsibilities to their families. As a result of the government's attitude toward inflation these are the people who are being hurt most by the high cost of living, by the two figure inflation. The government says they are not being forced out of work. All it wants them to do is not pay premiums and not draw benefits. I have not been so angry since I came here, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Alexander: That is the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford). He just had a little conference with his colleagues at the provincial level to see whether they would accept a human rights commission in principle. He should direct his attention to that and see whether legislation can be brought in to assist Bell Canada remove hate messages from the wires. That would be a service to this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Basford: Read their communiqué.

Mr. Alexander: I will ask the minister a question about this tomorrow. On a matter of such seriousness I resent members of the front benches interjecting. When I am talking about the plight of our senior citizens they make light of it.

Why single out the senior citizens, Mr. Speaker? I direct that remark to the minister. We have the benefit control system, and if they are abusing the system they can be caught and let out of the system. Look at the minister smiling. There is something about him that reminds of Kojak, but I cannot think what it is.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Alexander: Why pick on the senior citizens? Benefit control officers can find out if they are abusing the system and take steps to correct it, but why cut them off? In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, as I look at the handsome face of the Minister of Justice—

Mr. Nielsen: You look at what?

Mr. Alexander: I will not be much longer. As a matter of fact I will sit down right now and my colleague, the hon. member for Dauphin, will carry on, but I must say that we resent the attitude of the government regarding our senior citizens.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, since I sit across from more sedate cabinet ministers like the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras), and my friend from Winnipeg, the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Richardson), perhaps I will find it easier to stay on the subject than did my friend, with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) and the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) facing him and interrupting his remarks.

Mr. Basford: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker—