

Unemployment Insurance Act

There are many other ways in which to provide incentive, but we do not have the time to go into all of them today. We should provide an incentive for people to invest their money in this country instead of other countries. I believe the money is in this country and Canadians are anxious to see industries, shops and businesses expand, if we would just provide the incentive. But when we make it difficult for anyone to go into business, no wonder the money is leaving our country, and no wonder every time \$100,000 leaves Canada a number of people are left unemployed. That will grow and grow unless we start changing it.

I want to say a word or two in connection with the regions. I cannot follow this matter. If a man with a wife and a family of five is unemployed, he feels the dint of unemployment just as much as if there are 1,000, 2,000 or 10,000 unemployed. Why is there a difference? Is it because we think people do not want to work? Why do we say that we will pay the unemployed so much in one area and less in another area? They are all human beings. They all have wives and children or husbands and children. They all get hungry. Their stomachs ache when they do not get food. They bleed when they are pricked. Too often we try to work out ways and means of cutting down the amount, until we get to the point where we wonder if they have enough on which to live. A genuine, bona fide case of unemployment, whether there is one person or 1,000 unemployed, should receive equal and fair treatment.

I feel very keenly for the point I believe the last speaker was making on behalf of the people of his area. When one comes from an area without the large daily press, sometimes one's case does not secure very much publicity or attention. But if there is unemployment in the area, the people feel the dint of it just as severely as those in the big city where there is a daily press to espouse their needs.

I should like to deal for a moment or so with administration. I realize the administration of the unemployment insurance fund is difficult because everybody is not honest. I think most people are genuine and most people want to work, but there is a percentage who do not want to work and find technical reasons for drawing unemployment benefits without really being genuinely in need or unemployed. One winter in the city of Edmonton, I put on a leather jacket and went down to the CNR depot. That evening there were 20 or 30 reasonably young men there between the ages of 20 and 30. I sat and talked with each of them in turn. Out of the bunch who were there, 15 of them were on unemployment insurance. They made no bones about it. They did not lose their jobs; they just did not like working in the wintertime. I said to one of them, "Well, I do not like working in the wintertime either but I have to do it to hold my job." He said, "We do not. We work in the summer to build up enough unemployment and then we draw it in the winter."

That was not the purpose of unemployment insurance. I can understand genuine unemployment in a coal mining area in the off season when there is no work. I have seen that many times in my lifetime because I come from a coal mining area. I can understand genuine unemployment in a fishing area where

off season there is no work to be had. But in an area like Alberta where young men decide to work in the summer and enjoy the winter in the bright lights of the cities, that is not genuine unemployment. It might be a nice life, but it is not the purpose of the unemployment insurance fund to support that sort of life. No wonder farmers and businessmen are frustrated when they go to unemployment insurance offices and see a line-up of people but no one will go out to their establishments to work. One motel in Lake Louise last year had to close up a month early because they could not find anyone who would work.

There are abuses. I agree with the hon. member who said a few moments ago that we should not spend a lot of money and go on a witch hunt, but when these abuses show up let us throw the book at them. These people are taking food out of the mouths of those who are genuinely unemployed. I have no sympathy for those who abuse this system for their own particular advantage, but I think the situation could be rectified if the desire is there.

● (1630)

I wrote a letter to the minister of the last government. The government was defeated, so I wrote another letter to the present minister in connection with young students. Employers hiring young students who are going back to school at the end of the summer season have to deduct unemployment insurance premiums, which are then refunded when the students return to school. Employers in the area of Banff have told me it is hard enough to get employees there without having to deduct these unemployment insurance premiums, particularly when it is known that those young people will return to school and the deductions will be refunded. Let us put some sense into this thing. Those employers told me they could not see any sense to this procedure. I hope the minister will show some common sense in this regard. Ordinary everyday horse sense is the most wonderful thing this country ever had, but we do not have enough. We need more to straighten out a lot of these things.

Unemployment insurance was intended to provide a reasonable standard of living for those who are unemployed through no fault of their own. Let us make sure that objective is attained.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. Before I recognize the hon. member for Lincoln (Mr. Mackasey) may I deal with the late show this evening.