

Unemployment Insurance

so much talked about by so-called sociologists who keep preaching about the virtues of thrift but publish unrealistic reports.

In my opinion, unemployment insurance—and I think that every member in this house will agree with me—is one of the most useful and necessary measures ever passed by the previous government. We must agree that, if we did not have that legislation, many citizens would now be going through very serious hardships. However, when that organization was set up by the previous administration, the government knew that some day unemployment would be more serious. The former administration had enough foresight to follow in the footsteps of our southern neighbours and of some European countries when establishing an unemployment insurance commission which would lessen the burden brought about by recessions, as well as the onus of being blamed for the very unsound conditions which we call an unemployment crisis.

The former administration knew very well that, under a system where supply and demand regulate the economy, when production is at its peak, the day must come when demand declines, production slows down and employment disappears. But what the former government did not foresee, is that the day would come for it to return to the opposition ranks and to criticize all government legislation. No wonder, therefore, that today we see the Liberals using the word unemployment at every possible opportunity in order to rouse ill feeling against this government among the unemployed. However, the greatest irony is to see the opposition members pretending to sympathize with the plight of the unemployed, to see the Liberal party trying to get closer to the small people, while previously it only catered to large corporations and big businessmen. However, it is comforting to see one of the rare members of the Liberal party, the hon. member for Beauce (Mr. Racine), who has not been affected by the evil of his own party, introduce a resolution whose purpose is the welfare of the workers of his constituency. By his courage, his humility and his good intentions, he would certainly deserve to sit in the front benches of the opposition, and his presence there would greatly reinforce the influence of the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, there will always be people who will claim to be entitled to unemployment insurance benefits, but who are not actually entitled to them, and who do not understand why. Many times, people go to their member to obtain justice from the unemployment insurance commission. Per-

[Mr. Bourbonnais.]

sonally, I have often met with unemployment insurance officials in an attempt to clear up certain cases that had been referred to me, and every time I found that some mistake had been made in interpreting the commission's regulations. Unemployment insurance commission employees are to be commended, and it gives me pleasure to congratulate them. I hope those employees will keep working in this way.

Judging from certain facts related to me by unemployment insurance commission officials, I can understand why a number of cases, where eligibility for unemployment insurance benefits was doubtful have been settled by political influence and pressure, which is not quite in accordance—

Mr. Deschatelets: Give us cases.

Mr. Bourbonnais: I can see why U.I.C. employees take such pains to provide us with full information and are, at the same time, so devoted to their work. They at last are free from the dubious practices of the former Liberal members, and can now fully apply themselves to their work, without fear of being oppressed and rebuked by Conservatives.

(Text):

Mr. Robichaud: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, so far in this debate members on both sides of the house have been reminded to keep to the motion, but the remarks that are being made now are so far away from the motion that I think the hon. member should revert to the motion.

Mr. Speaker: If I am not mistaken, this is the first time that the hon. member has spoken in the house.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Then I can scarcely allow him the latitude which I was allowing him and he should return to the motion.

(Translation):

Mr. Bourbonnais: Well, Mr. Speaker, about this resolution again, may I say that there are on the order paper four similar motions all of them designed to improve the lot of the unemployed who are entitled to unemployment insurance benefits. Woodsmen—

Mr. Habel: No.

Mr. Bourbonnais: This particular one tends to improve the lot of woodsmen. Besides, it is a good resolution and I have congratulated the hon. member who moved it.