

much. In view of the little bit that it is, less than \$1 a week—

Mr. Mackasey: For new entrants.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Yes, for new entrants—I think it is a shame that we are not paying into the scheme. We are saying that the virtue of this legislation is its universality. This afternoon the Solicitor General (Mr. Goyer) told the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) that in this country universality means all citizens, including Members of Parliament. So I ask, why are we not in this plan too?

The feature of this legislation of which the minister is most proud, namely, universality, does not quite stand up. He has made the legislation just about universal for those who are employed and receive wages or salaries. This is what the scheme is—a plan under which people, whether poor risks or good risks, pay into a fund so that if their employment is interrupted they receive a benefit. The principle is a good one, but it would be better for society if it extended to all of us. I hope that some very serious thought is given to this proposition of real universality so that with respect to this and some of the other points I have mentioned the bill will come out of committee an even better bill than it is now.

[Translation]

Mr. Charles-Eugène Dionne (Kamouraska): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of the remarks I intend to make on Bill C-229, an Act respecting Unemployment Insurance in Canada, I wish to point out a few aspects which I consider important, particularly the existence of unemployment here in Canada before the legislation was passed in 1940.

I am trying to be realistic and to tackle this subject while taking into account the actual facts. I do not believe any serious people would ever claim that an unemployment insurance legislation can solve the unemployment problem, since it has been proved that unemployment existed before the passage of the legislation. As a matter of fact, it is higher today, in spite of the many years of implementation of that legislation and its regulations.

I do not believe that Bill C-229, which is the subject of our debate today, includes appropriate proposals to solve the unemployment problem. The proposals included in the white paper were examined in committee and used in the drafting of the bill now before us. But that does not represent a solution to the unemployment problem and it is quite easy to prove it.

The object of this measure is to help unemployed people either by reducing the inconveniences due to the lack of income, by paying them benefits or helping them to get suitable employment.

I admit that many investigations were made since the passage of the measure in 1940 and that many changes were made in the attendant regulations. A commission of inquiry of the Unemployment Insurance Act presented quite a voluminous report in November 1962, and in 1970 and 1971, we studied the proposals included in the white paper tabled by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey).

Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971

I am happy to point out here that those proposals were studied with that spirit of co-operation that always prevailed among the committee members.

Representations were made by several organizations that had the privilege, through their representatives, of expressing their opinion on the advantages or disadvantages of the implementation of the proposals included in the white paper.

Judging from Bill C-229, I find that very few changes have been made even though the officials of various associations have objected to certain provisions of the white paper.

I propose to make some suggestions which I find practical and which, in my humble opinion, would make it easier to understand the various requirements of the act and regulations. I hope that the decision-making authorities will take them into consideration in due course.

I wished to make these few points at the beginning of my remarks so as to give the House a better understanding of the reasons for my attitude towards the proposed amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act.

• (9:30 p.m.)

In short, Bill C-229 is not the solution to the unemployment problem but a palliative required by an ailing economic system. It would be more logical to set up an economic system based on natural order and on the logic of facts instead of putting up with the disastrous consequences of an economic situation based on a financial system continually in conflict with current economic realities. Obviously, the situation would be quite different if all the workers could find a suitable job at will.

I also wish to point out the inconsistency between the supporters of full employment—"everybody harnessed", as in some socialist countries—and the supporters of the financial system responsible for inflation and unemployment.

For our would-be socialists, lack of planning is usually responsible for all those unfortunate happenings. It has become the fashionable expression. In the meantime, full employment is still being urged although any sensible person will recognise it as almost impossible in a world where machines have been replacing man to an astonishing degree these last years.

I shall not dwell at length on this contradiction so obvious to the reasonably well-informed observer. It is clearly difficult to reconcile those two contradictory proposals: full employment and unemployment. Even though we are living in a society where the supporters of contradictions seem bent on convincing themselves that their claims are well grounded, we must nevertheless try to be logical.

Failure to be logical among the supporters of this same financial system has largely contributed to creating periods of unemployment. The Canadian people who have been through the 1929 to 1939 recession know that it is following that sad period, which showed the absurdity of the system, that we heard about an Unemployment Insurance Act. The party politicians created study groups, convened their projects officers who travelled through