

### *Family Allowances*

of tuberculosis. So I hope we shall not hear again the kind of speech we heard the other night from the Minister of National Health and Welfare. I hope she will go back to being the one person in that so-called Liberal cabinet who really understands that a large percentage of the people of Canada are in need, and that their conditions have not been improved by the policies which the federal and provincial governments have applied.

I said at the beginning of my speech that we would support this bill. It is a move in the right direction, but it is only a small step in the right direction. I suggest to the minister and to the government that if they were really interested in improving the condition of the people or in redistributing the wealth and benefits which could be achieved, they would set themselves the objective, the goal, of full employment. What we have seen under the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) for the last ten years is precisely the opposite result.

When the Prime Minister took office in September, 1968, there were just under 300,000 people unemployed. That was 3.7 per cent of the labour force. What we find ten years later is 946,000 unemployed—7.7 per cent of the labour force. The number of the unemployed has almost tripled and the percentage has more than doubled. That is the government's record. The most serious effect of this tremendous increase in unemployment is, of course, felt by the unemployed themselves. But every Canadian suffers as a result of that unemployment.

Don McGillivray, who writes a column several times a week appearing in the Southam Press, wrote an article which appeared in the *Montreal Gazette* on October 11 of this year, in which he analyzed the effects of unemployment. I quote from his article because Mr. McGillivray is by no means a wild-eyed radical, and the Southam Press cannot be called anything but an establishment organization. Here is what Mr. McGillivray said:

Unemployment can never be reduced to zero, of course. But surely it is reasonable to aim at getting it back to 5.6 per cent, the level of 1974 before the rate started to climb as a result of recession.

If unemployment could be cut to the 1974 level, 360,000 Canadians who are now unemployed would be working instead. They would be producing, at a guess, about \$8 billion worth of goods and services in addition to the \$230 billion worth of output expected this year. They would also be off welfare and unemployment insurance, a saving of perhaps \$2 billion a year.

The writer goes on:

Let's stay with hard cash. What would \$8 billion of extra production and \$2 billion of lowered government cost mean to the average Canadian family?

It means that unemployment cost the average Canadian family about \$140 last month in lost output and extra welfare payments. That adds up to about \$1,700 a year.

The result of the government's economic policies is being felt by every Canadian whether employed or unemployed.

If the government is interested in the redistribution of wealth, as members opposite have on occasion said they were, it would do something about the working poor of whom there are so many. In the *Financial Times* of August 1, 1977, George Radwanski, who writes a column every week, summarized the findings of the report made by the National Council of Welfare entitled "Jobs and Poverty", as follows:

[Mr. Orlikow.]

The report makes clear that neither laziness nor inability to work can be the decisive factor in the majority of cases. Fully 60 per cent of low income families headed by persons aged under 65 are the working poor, people who depend on labour rather than upon government assistance for most of their incomes.

Thirty per cent of the working poor are under the age of 25, most of them largest cities to wood lot operators and fish processing workers in our rural areas. They are the laundrymen in our dry cleaning establishments, the textile knitters and small appliance packers in our factories, the baby sitters and housekeepers in our homes.

The writer goes on to show who these poor people are:

They range from junior clerks and cleaning women in the office buildings of our largest cities to wood lot operators and fish processing workers in our rural areas. They are the laundrymen in our dry cleaning establishments, the textile knitters and small appliance packers in our factories, the baby sitters and housekeepers in our homes.

The article shows how poverty is prevalent in all parts of the country, in all provinces. Figures are given for the median income of these workers. Yet we find governments, federal and provincial, people who are living well, people who have "made it" in our society, people in business and in universities, saying that the minimum wage set by some of the provinces is too high. People who have to live on the minimum wage do not say that wages are too high. It is always those who are doing quite well, thank you, who lecture others about wages being too high.

● (1622)

I say to the government, and particularly to the Minister of National Health and Welfare, that if they are really concerned about poverty and inequity, they should move to raise the minimum wage, because it is a disgrace that there are hundreds of thousands of people in this country who are doing an honest day's work and whose wages are so low that they live in poverty. We have to do something about that. The time for that is long overdue.

Let me speak about one more group which is in trouble. I am thinking about probably hundreds of thousands of single parents, mostly women, who want to work, who are trained and educated for work, whose work is needed, who are not working, and who are living, many of them, on welfare or social assistance, because in this country we have not developed a system of nursery schools, day care centres and kindergartens so that the children of these single parent families can be taken care of during the daytime when their parents are at work.

In this respect this country and its governments, federal and provincial, have failed miserably, and we ought to look at the experiences of some countries in western Europe, such as Sweden and Norway. We ought to look at how they have established systems so that children whose parents want them to be in day care centres, nursery schools and kindergartens, can be there for a substantial part of the day so that their parents who want to work and are able to work can do so.

There was one other part of the minister's speech which disturbed me, and I thought it to be very surprising coming from this minister. Hon. members can find this part of her speech on page 672 of *Hansard*. In reference to the part of this bill which reduces the amount of the monthly cheque which is paid to the mother of each child in this country, from the