

supervising parent for a period of up to six months, but that is optional. This is an indication of the kind of care that is given in the adopting process and how well it usually works out.

That is not to say that there are no problems. We are all aware of the difficult adjustments that are required sometimes by the child, the parents, and anyone else involved in the process. In spite of the excellent modern work of the Children's Aid Society, there are physical and psychological problems that occur. Sometimes it is the question of both parents working. This is a serious enough matter with natural parents. There is a great deal of concern about what it does to the children as well as to the parents if one parent, usually the mother, is not at home. In spite of their income needs or wants, being at home when raising children, at least until they are psychologically mature at which time the parent who is at home can resume his or her career, is very important. The suitability of parents is certainly another serious concern, not only in terms of their ability, both natural and acquired, in terms of how much they prepare themselves to raise the child, but also their emotional stability and the stability of their marriage. The emotional and psychological needs of the child must also be considered.

The subject of income, as I understand it, unless our part of the country is not typical, is not a problem usually, and this bears directly on the bill before us. This bill is concerned with the income of the adoptive parent. What we find in Halton is that adoptive parents are well screened in this respect. They usually have the necessary income, and one of them has the motivation and desire to stay at home.

Then we get down to the availability of children for adoption these days. There has been a dramatic change in our times. There used to be a great shortage of adoptive parents; now there is a great shortage of children for adoption. That may change in the future, but it is an important factor which, I think, has a bearing on this bill.

With regard to the first half of the bill, I think we have a clear picture with regard to adoption itself. We all approve the adoption process. We probably all agree that in perhaps the majority of cases no assistance is necessary from the state to help the adoptive parents. They have their own income and one parent is prepared to stay at home. We all welcome the joys and the value to society of the adoption process and we recognize the fact that in some cases there may be a need for aid. I am not aware of any such cases lately, but I would certainly appreciate hearing if there are any. Perhaps there are parents who need some assistance who are willing to adopt children who are without an adoptive home.

Now we come to this whole business of unemployment insurance. For me it has been a very difficult and soul-searching subject for at least the last two years. Certainly it was a hot subject for me during the 1974 election campaign. I have been working hard on it with a great deal of agony ever since. As we know, originally the UIC program was designed to be a straight mathematical program for those who paid an insurance premium. Then it was extended to those who were included in the whole process of unemployment, and it became

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a national social program, which at first covered 4 per cent and later, under a certain formula, over 5.8 per cent, and perhaps the level will go higher than that. There is a great deal of concern about that. There are still some people who want this to be a straight program of insurance with no government assistance. This is a tough line, but at least we know where they stand.

It became more difficult a few years ago when certain other provisions were added, but there was an argument over the business of sickness benefits. Certainly sickness is not a form of unemployment, yet in many cases there was no good sickness coverage. Nothing was provided by the provinces to help people when they were laid off, workers who were not unionized. But somehow we managed to get by and most people have accepted it. Beyond that the next step was more controversial, namely, maternity benefits. I do not know what the experience of my colleagues was in that respect but it gave me a difficult time in the last election campaign.

There are people who simply cannot accept the concept of maternity benefits under the UIC program, and some of their arguments are understandable. There is the question of whether a person has a choice in being off work due to maternity, whether this was or was not a planned event. I suppose that in some cases it is planned, and in others it is unplanned. Nonetheless, there is a definite need in the case of some people and we will probably not have much luck in sorting out the planners from the unplanners, so we might as well include the latter in a universal program.

This leads me to the motion. If natural maternity is in question, what about adoptive maternity? There is no indication that the person had no choice. This is a voluntary process. The parents—in some cases the single parent—know what they are doing when they adopt. They have a clean-cut choice. They do not have to be off work, and that is the main point in considering whether or not maternity benefits should come under UIC. Unemployment insurance, even though it has become very complicated, is still a process of financial support for those who are out of work through no choice of their own. It comes down simply to that and no more. We have some grey areas, but when it comes right down to it, adoption is hard to imagine as one of those grey areas.

We have many other problems. For the first few years of this parliament the pressure was great—it certainly was for me as one member of parliament—on the question of abuses and disincentives. We all heard of the terrible outcry about the so called UIC ski teams out west, those who took UIC payments and used them for a holiday instead of trying to find a job and getting back into the productive work force. There are many other examples, even when there is a cracking down, a toughening and a tightening up which the government and the UIC have brought about.

● (1740)

There is tremendous concern about the total pay-out of unemployment insurance per year of \$3 billion to \$4 billion. That is perhaps 10 per cent of our total annual federal budget.