

than 50 jobless who were complaining about not receiving the benefits they were entitled to.

And each time myself or my Social Credit colleagues raise this question in the House, the minister replies with a wide smile and does not say anything. I want him to know that it is not because he is a Liberal that I will support this bill but because the unemployed need money. I support this bill because we have no right to have the unemployed pay for the government's incompetence. But I also want the minister to know that the centralized payment system of the Unemployment Insurance Commission is absolutely inhuman, impersonal and inefficient. It has been obvious since it was put into operation that the system is not worth a penny.

We are about to pass this bill, to remove the ceiling and to increase without limit the Unemployment Insurance Commission's budget to cover unemployment benefit payments. But these benefits should reach the unemployed.

Mr. Speaker, I am disgusted—and I want to say it clearly—by the administration of the Unemployment Insurance Commission which acts like an ostrich, hiding its head in the sand and not paying benefits.

To speak in a "practical and concrete" way, I should give a specific example which occurs again and again in our province. Probably this happens elsewhere, but the Progressive Conservative members do not say a word about it; they say rather that the Liberals are not good; we were aware of this fact, but we should like them to mention as well the problems resulting from unemployment in their regions.

Mr. Speaker, if a worker becomes unemployed on November 1, and after two months has not received one cent in unemployment insurance benefit, is it because the fund is empty? No, it is not. At that time, it was not empty, according to the minister, if he is not lying to us. This means that the administration which deals with the payment of unemployment insurance benefits is unable to pay such benefits and therefore, it should be blamed by hon. members who are responsible before Parliament of the administration of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very good thing to vote legislation to enable the people to get better service in such or such an area, but such legislation must at least reach the people concerned. I should like to speak again of the head of a family who becomes unemployed on the November 1 and who, on January 1, has not received one cent yet.

The minister will find it funny; he is not even listening, for this is of no interest to him. But I say to him that the head of a family cannot afford to live on fresh air and he is not the one who should finance the Unemployment Insurance Fund. If the fund is empty and benefits cannot be paid or if the unemployed is not eligible to unemployment benefits, let at least someone tell him.

If my colleagues from the Liberal party, as well as those from the other parties, are honest they know that these unemployed ask their member of Parliament what is happening in their case. They tell him they are not receiving benefits even though they have contributed over twenty times and have completed all the cards. They say they receive their cards every week. Other people do not receive any card at all. Sometimes they are sent a heap of

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correspondence, sometimes nothing at all and, at the end of two months, these same unemployed that we tried to help with extraordinary legislation, the Unemployment Insurance Act, have not received one cent yet. That is when the member of Parliament must get into the picture. This problem is so serious that the former minister and the current minister have established administrative sections in each regional office to help hon. members. This indicates that the numerous cases submitted to hon. members do exist.

Therefore, I wish to draw the minister's attention to that problem. Tonight, or tomorrow, we shall vote on this legislation aimed at raising the ceiling on the advances in order to replenish the unemployment insurance fund. However, I wish to point out to the minister that if I were sure that the unemployment insurance benefits will not be paid faster once we have passed this legislation, I would definitely vote against this bill in order to disable the Unemployment Insurance Commission and make it unworkable.

Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to vote all the credits possible to allow the Unemployment Insurance Commission to operate but on condition that the benefits really reach the persons actually unemployed.

The situation is very serious. In fact, official statistics show that in Quebec, among other places, the unemployment rate may exceed 10 per cent. I realize that the Unemployment Insurance Commission cannot check unemployment, but it can at least alleviate the hardship suffered by the unemployed. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I consider that the process put in place by the minister and his predecessor in order to decentralize the payment of the benefits is outdated and inefficient, and should indeed be modified. Actually, the local offices should be set up again in order that the benefits might be paid to the recipient from hand to hand to make sure that he gets them regularly, as it should be.

Mr. Speaker, unemployment insurance is like private insurance, health insurance or any other type of insurance. The person who pays a premium expects that the indemnity will be paid to him right away if he is entitled to it.

Unemployment insurance is a public insurance intended to provide the worker with some revenue when he loses his job. Consequently, for unemployment insurance to prove really valuable, its benefits should be paid while the beneficiary is unemployed and not when he has resumed work.

I have in mind at least ten cases where benefits were paid when the beneficiary had resumed work after two or three months of unemployment, which is revolting.

When we get in touch with the regional authorities, we usually get an answer because the officials are devoted. The problem is not there but solely in the impersonal, ineffective and stupid Montreal office and headquarters in all other provinces where everything is computerized. And even if a benefit has been authorized by the director of a regional office that payment will be made only two or three weeks later, unless they make a special payment, as it is called in administrative parlance.