

In conclusion, the Unemployment Insurance Act now needs some respite from publicity of any kind so that officials can get down to doing the things that are obvious, such as the elimination of abuse. No one in the House is in favour of abuse. I am not saying this for the benefit of the hon. gentleman, for whom I have great respect, but the approach to unemployment insurance should be a philosophical one. If we start with the concept that goes back to biblical days, that everyone must work by the sweat of his brow, and accept the argument that the measure of success of any government must be the number of people who are working and the number of jobs created—in other words, quantity rather than quality—then we will be in a bind to force industry to create jobs for the sake of creating jobs. If we could only understand that sometimes people cannot have jobs because it might not be in the interest of the community to create jobs for the sake of creating jobs, at least we can, through these types of enlightened programs, provide income until jobs are created.

Let us stop worrying about somebody getting something for nothing. We have to go back to the 1930s in Manitoba to realize that when one was drawing welfare one was not allowed to have, for example, a driver's licence in case one spent money on gasoline; in another province one was not allowed to have a radio licence in case one wasted time listening to the radio; in still another province one was not allowed to have a liquor licence in case one spent a few cents on a case of beer.

Most people would rather work than be on unemployment insurance. Everybody would rather make \$150 working, the average income, than \$66 from unemployment insurance and perhaps be subjected to a degree of unintentional harassment by the control officer as well. If we would look at it from that aspect, and give the Unemployment Insurance Commission an opportunity to tighten up its regulations and to adopt some of the suggestions which the hon. member and others have made in order to improve its efficiency and make sure that people who are not entitled do not receive benefit cheques, all would be for the better.

Let us allow the commission to proceed with these interviews spelt out in the white paper which have yet to be carried on in great numbers or with any consistency. People should sit down with an insurance officer not once but twice when unemployed so that they can see what can be done to upgrade their skills. Then, with respect to the farming community, we should see what can be done to open the door to immigration and bring in people who are willing to work. Having been the minister of manpower and immigration, I am aware of one of the paradoxes in this country, namely, that in times of high unemployment there are many jobs vacant with no source of unskilled, uneducated people to fill them. If our immigration policy were reversed we could have thousands of people who would be willing to take jobs on the farms, in the bush and in other unskilled occupations.

Mr. Knowles (Norfolk-Haldimand): May I ask the hon. member a question, Mr. Speaker? Does he realize that one of the major irritants among farmers who try to employ seasonal labourers is that once a labourer has worked eight weeks and has qualified, he would rather stay home and collect unemployment insurance than take a job?

Unemployment Insurance

Before you can catch up with that man the harvest is over, and it does not matter whether or not he works so far as the farmer is concerned.

Mr. Mackasey: The hon. gentleman would be doing the farm community a great service if he would accept my assurance that there is no evidence of this. People cannot work eight weeks, quit and then draw unemployment insurance unless the farmer supplies the person with a form for unemployment insurance. He must bring from that farmer a form indicating he has been laid off because of lack of work. He cannot draw unemployment insurance without that particular form.

Mr. Knowles (Norfolk-Haldimand): Unfortunately, it does not work that way.

Mr. Mackasey: But the law says it should.

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to associate myself with and to speak to the motion of the hon. member for Norfolk-Haldimand (Mr. Knowles). I have known my colleague since he came to this House, and he has always impressed me as one of the very thoughtful, well briefed and conscientious members who serve their constituencies well and who, without bombast and vain glory make a great impression on the House. They are good, conscientious and perceptive Canadians. I think he has produced an extremely valuable and interesting motion, and I congratulate him for it.

The matter is one of great detail, as the hon. member has pointed out. The hon. member for Verdun (Mr. Mackasey) has dwelt upon that. There are many very serious aspects of this question where the law and the regulations impinge upon the citizen, very often unhelpfully. But there is something much more profound in this motion. It strikes me that the hon. member has invited us for this hour—and perhaps one hour is far too short a time—to question, examine and discuss the whole concept of the work ethic. I think that one of the fundamental questions in this age of automation and cybernation is the suggestion that to work is to be a softie, that you do not really have to work; and when the state, through any of its emanations, makes it inviting for the citizen to choose a life of leisure rather than a life of labour, then we are in trouble.

A great man said a long time ago—in the course of human history it may not seem long, but for us it is a long time ago—"If any one will not work, let him not eat". Some might think that I am quoting Karl Marx, Chairman Mao, or Lenin: I am in fact quoting St. Paul. Those of us who were tagged with a Presbyterian heritage have oft been accused of dragging the work ethic all about the place. Calvin was accused of suggesting that if you wanted to prove your calling and election to the next world, the only way to do it is to so prosper in this world that anyone would know that you were clearly tapped to go up aloft in a radiant glow of materialistic splendour. That is quite an oversimplification of what Calvin meant. But I wonder if in our society, where so much can be done mechanistically, if we are not lacking in thoughtfulness if we deliberately denigrate, degrade and belittle the work ethic.