

Income Tax

people who are not contributing anything to the community.

The proposal I am about to make, one which is not necessarily supported by the Social Credit Party of Canada, but in which I, as elected member for Lotbinière riding, strongly believe, is very likely to raise a general outcry. My purpose is this. I am aware that Canadians, but more specifically young Canadians, are anxious to work. Mr. Speaker, I am speaking on behalf of those I know within my constituency who are shocked by the huge amounts of money which are being wasted.

The Unemployment Insurance Commission is now paying benefits. We also have investigators on the road who are bothering the unemployed receiving those benefits and sometimes they even force them—and I can prove it—to make disqualifying statements.

Officials make it their specialty to bother our fellow-citizens even if they have contributed to unemployment insurance. This year alone, unemployment insurance, not in administration but in benefits, will amount to \$1.3 billion. The Unemployment Insurance Commission is centralized in Montreal. If only it worked! If only it paid benefits efficiently! But it does not, everything is centralized in Montreal, everything is stored in an electronic computer that pays the benefits. The regional office in Drummondville will tell you: Sir, your record is in order and the Victoriaville local office will tell you: Sir, your record is in order. But you do not receive your benefits. I know cases where the unemployed have not received one cent in benefits since November, December 5, December 7, 10 or 15.

Mr. Speaker, the situation seems urgent to me. If the government can help low-income earners through taxation, let us first make civil servants respect legislation passed by Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, the situation is ridiculous. Last Saturday, I was at my office in Sainte-Croix de Lotbinière. I was called on by 42 fellow citizens having problems with the administration. I do not ask them if they are Liberals, Progressive Conservatives or Social Crediters. They all are my fellow citizens. Yesterday in Victoriaville I was at my office all day and I could not come to the House as I had too much work because of the civil servants not doing theirs. They bother people receiving benefits instead of processing payments. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, at least 10 cases of that type were submitted to me at my Victoriaville office, 551 Blvd. Bois-Franc-sud. I can give the names and addresses of those people. Those families have an average of three children and they have not received any unemployment benefits for one month and a half. How do they live?

These people are sent back to welfare. There they are required to sign a paper: "Here you are, Sir, sign here that you will give us the money back when you get paid by the federal government". The poor man, because he has no choice, because he has to put some food on his table, signs this acknowledgement of debt over to the welfare office and comes to his representative. One man came to me and said this: "Mr. Fortin, how do you explain that I do not get my cards? I am willing to work. I wrote to the manpower centre, I try to find employment, I want to work, I want to build my country and nevertheless, in Drummondville,

[Mr. Fortin.]

they tell me I do not want to work, that I am not looking for employment, and in Montreal they say they cannot pay me because everything is frozen. Your case is under study".

● (1650)

Mr. Speaker, that citizen, a man with a family, is now disgusted. I see in the House the hon. member for Frontenac (Mr. Corriveau) who represents the riding next to mine. Plessisville is in his riding. I am looking after several Plessisville cases in that predicament. I call upon the hon. member for Frontenac to join with the other members from the Eastern Townships to give the Unemployment Insurance Commission a damn good ride so the recipients can get justice.

Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. Ask the hon. member for Abitibi (Mr. Laprise), the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette), ask most members from Quebec who pays for the whole of the province. It is as stuck as stuck can be. The office in Drummondville even suggested to me no longer answering our letters because they cannot keep up, yet we know the problem lies in Montreal.

Mr. Speaker, I say quite humbly that if the minister in his ways and means motion of November 18 really wants to give this country leadership through Bill C-49, if he really wants Canadians to be encouraged to work and pay the taxes set out in Bill C-49, let us start at least by showing leadership in respect of our crown corporations, our departments, to get the public service going and have the legislation implemented so those for whom the legislation was voted can benefit from it.

Otherwise, Mr. Speaker, our work in this House is useless. We can vote all the legislation we want here, however perfect it may be, if the public service is not equipped, if it does not have the necessary tools or personnel to implement that legislation so it can really benefit the interests of our fellow citizens, you and I, Mr. Speaker, have lost our time in this House.

I think that is the basic problem. People are having problems with unemployment insurance. Let us face it, local initiatives will not solve the manpower and unemployment problem in Canada. Let us start, Mr. Speaker, by setting that commission straight.

There is another thing I would also like to say about the economic situation. Suppose the Unemployment Insurance Commission does its work. The fact still remains that those who are out of work in my area are not happy about being unemployed. My constituents want to work. They have their house.

Victoriaville is one of the cities in Quebec with the greatest number of families in single family units. Our people are proud of their property. They want to work because they need to work. They believe in work because men assert themselves through work, not unemployment. It is a shame today to enter the unemployment insurance office in Sherbrooke, in Lévis, in Trois-Rivières, and see 40, 50, 60 young men 25, 30 or 35 years old filling in little unemployment insurance cards. That, Mr. Speaker, is some future for a country!

Of course we need social security, but we Canadians have a negative attitude. I was listening moments ago to a