

Still, even if the unemployment insurance plan becomes a welfare scheme, the benefits still depend on the contributions of the taxpayers; they do not effect those who have not contributed long enough, that is, those who are seeking employment for the first time and cannot find any, which is the case for most young people. Those unemployed must turn to welfare, whatever form it now assumes.

It is easy to see how abuses are perpetuated by the system. For instance, the *Toronto Globe and Mail* dated March 16 criticized the government for having used the individual as a basis instead of the family: the income of the individual is taken into account, and not that of the whole family. To my mind, if the system is to be fair, the realities of life—and the family is one of them, should be considered.

I therefore think it timely to mention, although I am not particularly expert in that field, that clause 44 of the bill seems to me most unfair because it tends to benefit the employer. Clause 44 deals with a stoppage of work during which a claimant is entitled to benefits.

That clause applies also in the case of strikes or lock outs. Although I recognize that no parties should be subsidized in a labour dispute, I cannot imagine how the two situations are similar.

In the case of a strike, workers go on strike knowing that they will get no income during that strike; it is their choice. But when it comes to a lock out, the situation is altogether different. Employees would be deprived of their benefits in spite of the fact that it is the employer who is the actual cause of the work stoppage. They would really be unemployed, but not receiving benefits, although they have paid their contributions. This does not seem fair at all, as the employer would enjoy a considerable advantage in an industrial conflict created by himself.

Accordingly, I wish to suggest that the application of clause 44 be restricted and not extend to cases of lock out.

In my opinion, a lock out is tantamount to a lay off. The employee takes no part in the employer's decision, which deprives him of his income for the duration of the lock out. In such a situation, an employer would have nothing to do for his employees to agree with his requests. He could use the unemployment insurance system in a negative way.

So, I suggest that application of clause 44 be restricted to a strike as defined in the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act.

Another important point, in my opinion, to suggest to the minister who sponsors this bill, has to do with regulations. The act is one thing: it is a step towards legislation, and regulations are another. To qualify or, as we say, to be entitled to benefits, present regulations provide that the most recent period, that is the last 24 months elapsed before the filing of a claim has to be the qualifying period for regular or seasonal benefit, whatever the case may be.

Now, with respect to workers or persons that already have paid in their contributions to the Unemployment

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Insurance Fund, there are exceptions but I will indicate only two of them. The two-year period may be extended, for instance, in the case of a person having been self-employed and, secondly, in the case of a Canadian who has been imprisoned. I have nothing to say against the people who devised those regulations but in my opinion, it is not normal that some people should be so readily deprived of their rights. Among these people, I might mention our soldiers' wives who have to accompany their husbands to every corner of the earth.

Since the military camp of Valcartier is situated in the electoral district of Portneuf, I met some of the wives who were really dissatisfied with this system. In fact, after having contributed to the development of our economic life through regular work in a Canadian industry, or office or elsewhere, these people who often paid their contributions to the Unemployment Insurance Fund during three, four, five or even seven years accompanied their husband to Germany or elsewhere; on their return to Canada at the end of two years or more, several of them able to return to work are forced to remain idle because their employers have replaced them, or else because Canada has few opportunities to offer at the present time. Therefore, they go to Canada Manpower Centres where they are made to understand that they have lost their rights since a period of two years has elapsed between the time they paid their contributions and the filing of a claim.

Therefore, I would ask the minister to kindly reconsider this point in order to bring the necessary changes so that the views of military men may be eligible for the same benefits that some Canadians have accrued while they were in prison. It is not a privileged treatment but, in my view, the wives of military men deserve as much consideration as the former inmates of a prison.

Also, under this bill, the government proposes to make more flexible the insurance periods that would entitle the unemployed to benefits. And this period would be based on the unemployment rate. I am seriously concerned by this procedure, and so should be those who are going to be victimized by its implementation. In my view, the legislation should specify the areas and the rates of unemployment concerned. The bill is not clear enough in this respect as it stands now.

• (8:40 p.m.)

Since several of the Commission's offices have been transferred over the years from rural areas to urban centres, it might happen at a given time that some areas with a high number of unemployed should cease to be considered as separate entities since they would be confused with urban areas where the economic situation is somewhat better.

The small offices have been closed down under the pretence that centralized service allowed for higher quality. But since this kind of operation has been launched, the many complaints I have received from some of my constituents clearly evidence the fact that the results have not lived up to the promises. Various points should be taken into account, such as the length of the qualify-