

*Supply*

through no fault of his own, out on the street. He filed an appeal with the Unemployment Insurance Commission and hopes it will rule in his favour. Unfortunately, if it does, it is highly likely that the Government will appeal the decision as it did in the case of the gentleman from Winnipeg to whom I referred earlier. He went to the Board of Referees which was established by the Government to determine who was right and who was wrong. He fought his case and won. He should have received his pay but, instead, the Government appealed it. The Government has the finances and resources to appeal this all the way to the Supreme Court, but this particular gentleman does not have those resources. Why does the Government not pay him in a show of good faith? Why does the Government not, at the very least, in anticipation of the results of the Forget Commission, say that it will declare a moratorium on this unfair law, at least until it has heard what the Forget Commission has to say?

Unlike the Minister of National Health and Welfare, I made a presentation to the Forget Commission. The commissioners were extremely sympathetic, but said their hands were tied. They could not force the Government to make changes in the interim. They were looking at the over-all structure of the unemployment insurance scheme and would not be ready to report until at least the fall of 1986. In the meantime, hundreds of workers are losing their homes, being deprived of benefits, and having their human rights stripped from them simply because the Government fails to listen to people like the P.C. Women's Association of Oromocto.

I learned a lesson when I was a member of the Liberal Opposition in Ontario. At that time there was a Budget introduced by Marc Lalonde. He decided in his wisdom that he would start to declare workers' compensation benefits as income for the purpose of calculating the guaranteed income supplement. I disagreed with him and wrote to him at the time. As a result of that particular small change in the Budget, hundreds, if not thousands, of workers who had perhaps a very small worker's compensation pension as well as their old age pension, had their guaranteed income supplement cut back.

I wrote to Mr. Lalonde saying that this may not be the most earth-shattering measure in his Budget, but that it would stick in the craw of Canadians for a long time. When I travelled in my riding and spoke with injured workers, they asked why the Liberal Government took this measure. The issue passed unnoticed for the most part, but some of us expressed our concern by sending a message to the Liberal Government of the day. We said that we knew changes were needed, but asked that they not be taken out on the backs of the people who could least afford to pay. That includes people who have been forced into early retirement, who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own, and who, in many cases, are looking for work but do not have a hope of finding another job.

Will you tell me that women and men who lose their jobs at the age of 59, 60, or 61 will have a chance for re-employment? Women come into my riding office who have been subject to lay-offs as a result of the closure of Allen Industries. One woman in particular who is 45 years of age is not eligible for

LAB benefits because her age and her 15 years of experience do not add up to the required 80 years. Therefore, she is looking for a job. Since she receives a small pension, she is being denied the right to collect unemployment insurance benefits.

**Mr. Crosby:** How small?

**Ms. Coppins:** The Member asks how small. I will tell you how small. People are receiving pensions of \$200 and \$300 a month with which they are required to support families. It may be easy for us in this House to talk about it, but it is wrong for a person receiving a pension of \$300, \$400, or \$500 a month to be denied unemployment insurance benefits. The Member shakes his head and says it is not wrong. I will table in this House the name of a man who has sold his home as a result of the changes which the Government has made in the Unemployment Insurance Commission. If the Member can guarantee me that that man should not have sold his home, that he was living high off the hog, I will withdraw my words and my position. I have received hundreds of letters on this issue, as have my colleagues, the Member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke (Mr. Hopkins) and the Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East (Mr. Allmand).

[*Translation*]

Quite clearly, Mr. Speaker, this Bill affects the more destitute, people who are getting older, who are forced to quit working at age 55 or 60 and who will be penalized by the Government.

There is a second consideration on which I would rather not comment because there is not much time left. I would just like to say that this measure will create even more unemployment among young people because older workers will no longer choose to retire. If they cannot draw unemployment insurance benefits they will refuse to retire and this will not free jobs for younger Canadians. This Bill is just one more insult to Senator Hébert who is now fighting in the Senate for young people. I think that the Government and Hon. Members themselves should realize that their constituents will consider that as their personal and individual decision.

[*English*]

I urge government Members, in the spirit of the new rules, to vote with their consciences rather than just following the Party line.

• (1720)

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr. Crosby:** Mr. Speaker, I have a comment on the Member's remarks concerning eligibility for unemployment insurance of persons with pension income. I call to her attention that she said that with a pension of \$200 or \$300 or \$400 a month, a person would be ineligible for unemployment insurance. I ask her to check with a UIC office and check the formula which applies and find out who is wrong on that point.