

*Unemployment Insurance Act*

House of the efforts and the wish of some ministers to help the most underprivileged members of our society. I would also like to note, Mr. Speaker, that on the side of the majority, there are now ministers who work very hard to at least show that they want to redistribute the wealth of the country to those who need it most.

In his last budget, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) took a step forward by bringing up the possibility of a guaranteed annual income. He gave us a book and asked us to read it and study it to determine what could be suggested in the House on this subject. This book concerns essentially the possibility of a guaranteed annual income for the future. I congratulate the Minister of Finance for having thought of this. However, this should not be an excuse for the minister who now sponsors the bill on unemployment insurance to wash his hands of the whole matter and say: We shall wait for the guaranteed annual income. It should have been implemented at the same time as this bill was introduced.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) talked about optional retirement at 60 for those who want it. I hope that this is not only an idle promise, as the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) has just said, and that the Minister of National Health and Welfare is truly concerned about the fate of the poor. Because of her association with her department, she is well aware that a great many people are below the poverty line. There is quite a contradiction. The Minister of National Health and Welfare tries to help the poor while the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Cullen) creates poverty. And that in the same government. Does that mean that one has much more compassion than the other, or the latter forgot that to please the majority? I do not believe so, Mr. Speaker. I feel, however, the minister was in error when he brought this legislation in. For this reason we feel in this party we cannot support it.

We proved last night we have no other choice. We are sorry because we feel no sympathy for those who abuse unemployment insurance. We cannot stand those UIC "pensioners". We cannot approve that. A few of them I would not be sure about, but a fraction can and do abuse it. Some 30 unemployed at least come to see me every week, 99.9 per cent of whom are certainly honest, but some of them have lost track of the system because the program has been amended four times in five years. The unemployed would have to be lawyers to understand this legislation. Unfortunately they have no choice.

Let me come back to another minister, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan). I like the way he operates. He is very dedicated. He does all he can for those who want to get out of farming because of the impact imports have. They stay on. He looks after the poor and I commend him for that.

As the hon. member for Richmond, and I would conclude on this, as Social Credit member I would like to make a comment, but I want to be well understood. This comment is made in the spirit of Christmas. The parliamentary secretary, the

[Mr. Beaudoin.]

hon. member for Wellington stated yesterday he wanted to deal mainly with Social Crediters because we had not attended committee meetings and so forth. Mr. Speaker, I would like to remark that we are nine members from the Social Credit Party of Canada elected in the House, and I do not think we have stolen our seats because we won them in an honest and democratic election.

We are nine, and three are ill, so they are not here which leaves only six to attend the meetings of all the committees of the House, to sit in the House and to fulfill the other duties. I would like the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Immigration to withdraw the words he said yesterday. I think he said this: I am the only one here who can say that with any degree of honesty. I would tell my hon. colleague that if he has the degree of honesty he thinks he has, he should withdraw his words.

● (1432)

[English]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I see the minister is seeking the floor.

**Mr. Cullen:** There is a new motion before the House, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** That is correct. There is an amendment. With the amendment before us the minister has the right to speak.

**Mr. Benjamin:** The minister does not need to speak again; he has won.

**Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** The hon. member to my right, who is really on the left but is not sitting in his proper place, says we have already won. The reason we have won, I suggest, is because we have been fighting for this bill with might and main.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Miss MacDonald:** That shows how poor your case is.

**Mr. Cullen:** The hon. member for Wellington (Mr. Maine) has done a phenomenal job. He has attended every meeting of the committee and every steering committee meeting. No minister has been better served by a parliamentary secretary. He had a difficult job to do and he did it extremely well; I am greatly indebted to him.

I have listened carefully to what has been said during the debate. I shall not attempt to deal with all the comments which have been made but I see present in the chamber an hon. member who has been described as the "perfect little mayor."

● (1442)

When I heard him make his speech I felt that some imperfections were beginning to show and that perhaps the perfection was somewhat overblown when he was mayor. I was reminded of a grammatical expression. Perhaps the hon. mem-