

may make things easier for the staff of the Unemployment Insurance Commission, does not make it any easier for working people to get their claims processed. I hope the minister will try to persuade his people to reconsider the new system using the computer. It would cost a lot of money to get rid of the computer now and restore personal service but I think it might be worth while.

I want to make one thing clear, Mr. Speaker. Any member of this House who represents an industrial area has many complaints. I do not mind dealing with them but there is no reason why working people should experience a delay in having their claims dealt with. They should not have to approach their Member of Parliament in order to have their claims paid. I have had nothing but co-operation from the office in London, Ontario but still, a constituent would not have to come to me if the system worked properly. The minister has given his word to try and improve it and I am sure he will. He would save the time of the members of this House who should be doing other things.

A number of provisions in the bill still need to be clarified. I have read through it carefully and I notice there is provision for a number of regulations. Perhaps the minister will clarify this at the committee stage, although he may have an earlier opportunity to do so. I should like to get clarification on the question of moonlighting. I know that a new clause of the bill provides that if a person does one day's work a week as a cleaner or a gardener, he is exempt. What about the person who works at the steel company of Canada for eight hours a day and then takes an extra job for two or three hours a day, four or five days a week? Is he to pay unemployment insurance? Where is the line to be drawn between working one or two hours a week or three or four? I hope the minister will clarify this situation.

I hope there will be provision for some ministerial discretion in this bill. In the present act there are all sorts of situations which were clearly never contemplated by Parliament and, as a consequence, people have been subject to severe penalties. There is the McKenzie case in my own area. The man had a cattle sales arena and when some of his farmer neighbours brought their cattle in to be sold they stayed to help out. If the sale was a success, they got \$5 or \$10. If it was not, they got nothing. However, McKenzie was penalized severely for not paying unemployment insurance. It was a ridiculous situation and certainly never one contemplated by the act. I could cite a few more examples but will not take up the time of the House. In that case, I might say, the minister was co-operative and tried to be helpful, but the senior members of the commission did not seem to pay much attention to the minister. When the matter was being discussed with the minister, the commission went ahead, apparently unknown to the minister, and seized the bank account of the gentleman in question. I hope that in future it will be possible for the minister to exercise a little more control over the activities of the senior members of the Unemployment Insurance Commission. They are acting in far too arbitrary a manner, and I hope that the new legislation will enable the minister to exercise more control.

*Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971*

• (4:00 p.m.)

There is something else which ought to be clarified in the new legislation, namely, the difference between an independent contractor and a contractor of service. I admit that even in law, even in regular jurisprudence, it is sometimes hard to tell just who is an independent contractor and what constitutes a contractor of service. The law seems to indicate that it depends on the facts of the case. Time after time this question has come up in connection with the administration of the present act. It would be helpful in the administration of the new act if it could be clearly set out, and possibly this could be done at the committee stage, who, for the purposes of this act, will be considered as an independent contractor and who will be considered as a contractor of service. I say that because much of the time of Members of Parliament has been needlessly taken up in bringing this matter before the commission. I hope that that problem will be clarified at this time.

I come now to something a great many people have spoken about, the question of teachers. The principle of universality in connection with this bill has been mentioned. The hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) referred to it. The good lady wanted to include doctors, lawyers and everybody else in the scheme. Perhaps that would be a good idea in certain kinds of social communities. I do not think it would be in this one, for the reasons pointed out by the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis). It seems to me that we are heading towards some form of guaranteed annual income. I would not disagree with that at all. I think that this probably could be a pretty good idea, depending on how it is worked out.

The late Senator Wallace McCutcheon, who by no stretch of the imagination could be described as a socialist, felt that we ought to have some scheme of this nature. He thought you could probably pay more money to people and raise the minimum poverty level if you got rid of most of the present schemes that provide assistance. He thought that the money you would save administratively would provide a much larger income to needy people. If you abolished half the administrative officials and amalgamated the administration under one department, you could save a great deal of money. I agree, perhaps, that the guaranteed annual income is the goal we should be heading for, and everybody should contribute towards it. I certainly would not disagree with that idea at all; but it would depend, of course, on how it is all worked out. The principle is good, I think, and I gather that the minister is edging in that direction.

I think there ought to be larger unemployment insurance benefits, because of inflation in the country. I agree that larger benefits ought to be paid. What I do not like in the present act and what I do not agree with is this: why should one or two groups be penalized and be discriminated against? You will hear people arguing that we are not really discriminating against teachers; but it certainly appears that way to me. I think, if we are to pay larger benefits, and I think that is a good idea in view of present economic conditions in Canada, we