

In the old days before computerization—which may be more efficient for the large mass of the people—if one had a problem one could make an inquiry and find out what was happening. But today if the computer makes a mistake or somebody fills out a form wrongly, the delay can run into weeks or months. People have to wait anywhere from 8 to 13 weeks. What does this mean to the ordinary citizen, particularly the citizen in the lower income bracket? It means that if he has been unable to save any money there is only one place to go.

The parliamentary secretary tried to create the impression that arrangements have been made with the provinces and municipalities to give these people emergency welfare which they can repay when they get their unemployment insurance cheques. I have checked with the province of Manitoba and no such agreement has been made. I understand that where agreements have been made, no publicity has been given to such agreements either by the Unemployment Insurance Commission or by the province concerned. The result is that people in need are being forced to go to loan-sharks to get money with which to buy food.

The parliamentary secretary at first tried to pooh-poo the suggestion that this was going on. In the city of Winnipeg there are at least two agencies that advertise regularly every day that if these people need money all they need do is bring their unemployment insurance cards and they will get it. The fact they discount the claim by something in the neighbourhood of 200 to 300 per cent interest does not seem to interest the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. Obviously, he is not in need of money to pay his next week's grocery bill.

• (1550)

This disaster which was created first of all by the deliberate action of this government when it amended the Unemployment Insurance Act to extend the benefits but to keep the amount of money which is paid out within the same range as before, has befallen tens of thousands of people in Canada. The administrative mess for which one can blame the government, the minister and the top officers of the Unemployment Insurance Commission has created a blot on our society of which every citizen and certainly every member of parliament should be ashamed.

We have been told again and again that steps have been taken at this late to clean up the mess. I believe that the minister—I believe him a good deal more than I believe his parliamentary secretary—is sincere when he says that he has ordered that steps be taken to clean up the mess. I hope it will not be very long before people who are unfortunate enough to be unemployed, a large percentage of them because of the deliberate policies regarding economic growth put into effect by this Liberal government, will get the benefits to which they are entitled. These people are entitled to unemployment insurance benefits. They have paid their unemployment insurance dues for years and are now in need of the benefits.

I hope that when the minister answers some of the complaints which have been made both inside and outside parliament he will take a much more realistic and humane attitude, one which will show some sympathy and

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concern for the people who are unfortunate enough to be caught in this terrible tragedy. I hope that his attitude will be much more sympathetic than the one demonstrated by the parliamentary secretary in his statements during the last couple of weeks.

[Translation]

**Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière):** Mr. Speaker, it is my duty to speak to the motion introduced today and which in short blames the government for being slow in administering its various programs.

Mr. Speaker, even if that non-confidence motion deals with part of the problem, I feel that it rather restricts that criticism and that it does not truly tackle the problems affecting the Canadian people.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some brief comments. This government as the previous ones at first passed a great number of bills, each one encroaching a little more upon the freedom of the individual or the citizen, while driving him a little more in a state of financial insecurity.

I would now like to discuss the second point, that is the fact that the citizen becomes more and more dependent upon the state, which is more powerful than ever.

I will conclude my remarks with some very definite examples. Finally, Mr. Speaker, in view of this great number of social projects and programs, bureaucracy has reached such proportions in Canada that it now manages the country instead of Parliament and the government. This bureaucracy is such that it not only controls the departments and the government, but stifles the people with all sorts of programs and harasses them with repeated inquiries which tend generally to downgrade the individual.

Mr. Speaker, as members of this House, we have a choice to make in 1972. Should we continue to support a policy which is responsible for depriving the individual bit by bit of its freedom while subjecting him to more insecurity—I refer to the measures which are submitted to us in Ottawa, in Quebec or elsewhere, aimed at slowly implanting socialism—or should we adopt a policy which tends not to discourage personal initiative, but on the contrary, to motivate the individual and enable him to assume his proper place in our country?

Here is a particular example, Mr. Speaker. To obtain their votes, students are promised scholarships which are insufficient as well as discriminatory since they are not granted generally.

Mr. Speaker, this scholarship system which is protected and established by federal and provincial governments directly discourages the individual in our society. This can be readily understood.

Let us consider a young student who works all summer and applies for a scholarship. Let us forget, for a moment, his father's salary or his family's income. If that student has worked all summer to help himself, he will not be eligible for a government's scholarship. He would receive a letter simply stating that: In view of your summer income, we are unable hereafter, in accordance with the scholarship program for students to grant you the financial aid you require.