

The most striking thing about this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is the nice words used by the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Cullen). He claims that this bill will make the unemployed more reasonable and more responsible. I wonder when an unemployed worker becomes reasonable and responsible. I think it is when he can eat three meals a day with what he can earn by working. If we want to strike off the unemployment rolls people who may rightfully deserve to be there, why do we not simply repeal the act, and rather than moving this measure in the House, propose legislation which would give these people a guaranteed annual income. If we had legislation to ensure a guaranteed annual income to these poor people, all members of the Social Credit Party of Canada would support the minister. We think of the poor and I believe there are many well meaning Liberal members who share our view—

**Mr. La Salle:** Yes, but they cannot say so!

**Mr. Beaudoin:** I have spoken to a number of them and they sigh in reply. It is like when Mr. Caouette occupied a seat next to me—I had the honour of sitting next to him for many years—history is repeating itself. Times change but history keeps repeating itself. If the Prime Minister lifts his little finger, everybody on the government side lift their little fingers, but that does not show much intelligence. There are far more unemployment than people who abuse of the system.

A study of the Economic Council of Canada stated that:

Four out of five unemployed in receipt of unemployment insurance benefits are jobless through no fault of their own.

I think this single sentence should make the minister realize that the bill which is brought forward on third reading is completely wrong and will do nothing to make us better understand the unemployed or to improve their lives.

As a corollary to this last point, let me add that for the legitimate unemployed, that is the worker who cannot find a job, the ever rising cost of living is just the same as for the rest of the people. But instead of compensating for the loss of revenue caused by inflation the government decides to lower the benefit rate from 66 per cent to 60 per cent. In view of the inflation factor the unemployed is therefore doubly penalized. In an announcement which has been published on September 1, 1978 the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Cullen) was explaining one of the main objectives of the new amendments of the Unemployment Insurance Act:

I want to make sure that the unemployment insurance system fully encourages Canadians to seek and to accept jobs.

What kind of story is this, Mr. Speaker? The minister knows full well that there are no jobs! There are 60,000 jobs for some 200,000 unemployed. For the 249,000 unemployed who are offered 50,000 jobs, that will represent three or four workers for the same job, if I get my figures right, and for long periods, five for the same job. What are they going to do? They are going to knock at the door of factories until the

### *Unemployment Insurance Act*

personnel officer is tired of them and they are going to go home frustrated with nothing to live on, nothing to eat, they will have to live on welfare with the help of the province to be able to eat three meals a day.

With the application of the standards which are contained in the bill which we are dealing with today, we end up with a complete nonsense. Once again, if we could give a sort of guaranteed maintenance so that those who have undergone a loss would be able to live decently, we would agree to adopt this bill. But we see with this new bill that the government once again gets its priorities all wrong. Instead of cracking down on the unemployment insurance system and making cuts they should crack down on the economy, and give it the necessary stimulants which would create more jobs.

The government says that one of the shortcomings of the present unemployment insurance plan is that people can too easily get benefits over and over again. That is a chronic disease. But who must be blamed if the unemployed cannot find a job or if they have to draw unemployment insurance to meet their basic needs? They cannot do otherwise. So, they cannot do anything but try to get unemployment insurance. Unemployment insurance is a form of guaranteed annual income for a number of unemployed and the government seems to reject a that philosophy, yet it is not against the guaranteed annual income concept. To say the least, the government is not very consistent nor logical in its line of thinking.

The government declares to anyone who wants to hear it that it is prepared to dialogue with the provinces. As regards the amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act, it did listen but for a while only. For instance, at a recent federal-provincial meeting the Minister of Employment and Immigration refused to concur with the views of provinces. They were seeking a delay in the implementation of the new amendments until the publication of a study on the impact of those amendments on various welfare agencies. If we try to implement those changes without taking that study into account, what is the use of such studies? Why should the government request studies on regulations for the poor or for those who are out of work will lose their unemployment insurance benefits after this bill has been adopted? But the government does not care about that nor does it agree with the provinces. It says: We are still going to adopt this legislation. Mr. Speaker, I think the minister is not very consistent with that bill.

The government unfairly accuses the unemployed of having caused an increase in the cost of unemployment insurance, but is the government forgetting its own role in this cost increase? The report of the Auditor General for 1977 mentions that \$142 million was paid out to people who were not entitled to benefits. What about that? I really wonder who will be able to solve the mystery of these expenditures without knowing who is responsible. I think I have explained the main aspects of my opinions on Bill C-14. However, I would like to remind the