

and if it is to continue there must be a systematic and comprehensive revision of the pact in Canada's interests.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Charles-Eugène Dionne (Kamouraska):** Mr. Speaker, the unemployment situation in Canada in general, and in my area in particular, affects the people concerned so severely that I consider it my duty to speak again at this stage of the debate in view of the numerous representations which have been made to the Manpower and Immigration Committee by various representative organizations, many of which have pointed out the serious consequences of the legislation we are now debating.

It is inconceivable that Bill C-27 might be adopted without major amendments to its various clauses. I support without hesitation the proposal to postpone the passage of this bill and refer it for further study so that we may eventually come out with effective legislation which will improve the distressing unemployment situation prevailing at present. Unemployed workers are said to be living off the backs of those who are fortunate enough to have a remunerative job. As far as I am concerned, those who live at the expense of workers in our society are rather those who exploit them. Unemployed people are entitled to benefits; they are not a present from the government. They are also entitled to objective and honest information.

● (1510)

There is no reason why the unemployed should be penalized for the least omission. There is a penalty when the employee quits his job on his own, even though he has been exploited and has suffered inhuman working conditions. They will not further inquire, they only take the employer's statement. There is a penalty when the unemployed do not actively seek a job, even if there is not one available and if 30 per cent of the labour force is idle. As I said before, I believe, rules on searching for employment seem to have been inspired by an old Burmese saying that there is no gold in every rock but there is no harm in looking for it. So the officials say look for a job even if there is not one. Can you imagine! There must be something wrong with the legislation if civil servants feel compelled to issue such instructions to the unemployed.

And just to give you an idea of the situation, I am going to point out evidence of searches for non-existent jobs. We know that for some time now senior officials of the commission have most probably given directives to their employees. They will not tell us about it but we can read between lines that claimants are expected to scout around for a job. I do not object to officials of the commission suggesting to the unemployed means of securing a job. However, let us not exaggerate. We have to consider the various factors involved. First, the local unemployment rate, second, the number of industries likely to require labour, third, the time of the year, as it may affect workers in forestry, agriculture, fishery, and other seasonal industries, finally, and this is a very important factor, the working and wage conditions prevailing at the places to which a worker is directed, the cost of moving, and the expected

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duration of employment: all these aspects must be checked over by people who are well aware of the working conditions prevailing in the place suggested to the applicant. We are well aware that as a result of these guidelines the unemployed had to seek jobs in an area where manpower did not have an available job. I wonder what is the use of those centres. Yet, they are supposed to provide whatever information is available. With thousands of job vacancies on file which cannot be filled by the unemployed, with the people in the area coming to see them fairly regularly to see if they have anything interesting to offer them, why then force a man who is without a job and without income, except for unemployment insurance benefits, to spend money on taxis to scout around for a job in neighbouring villages, 15, 20 or 25 miles away from home. For him to look around in his own community is not good enough. He is told: You limit your availability to your own area. But if within a radius of 25, 30 or 50 miles, covered by manpower districts, jobs cannot be found, why require the unemployed to spend what little money he gets from unemployment benefits to remain entitled to them?

Those bureaucratic requirements do not solve the problem of unemployment but rather help to exhaust the patience of the employers who have too many workers, and that of the jobless who cannot find work. I know a lot of employers back home. Some of them have written a special letter to be given the fellow when he shows up. They just date the letter and sign their names to it. They say: We have no work. Yet, the commission forces the fellow to go to the office. Then we are told: The commission does not oblige you to find work but only to look for some. Can you imagine anything like that! Have the fellow spend money looking for work that simply does not exist at some times of the year. As I said before, you have to hold a middle course between the two extremes, then have reasonable requirements. I shall give you a few examples to give you an idea of the situation.

I have here the case of a well-intentioned 19 year old whom I know very well from St. Pascal de Kamouraska who has been unemployed for several months. He would work occasionally. He would manage to find a job for two or three days and mention the wages he earned on his weekly reports. Some weeks he would not find anything at all. He was regularly pestered by commission officers: There is a mistake here, you forgot to mark this, you forgot to mark that. His parents had made a lot of sacrifices to get him educated. On October 27, that young man tired of the Unemployment Insurance Commission monkey business joined the army. At that point he practically had no other choice.

I have here a young girl, well educated, coming out of school with a good secretarial course with typing and shorthand. She made many contacts. I have a whole page here. She applied for a job at 50 to 60 places. She did not find any. She adds at the end of her letter that she contacted the Unemployment Insurance Commission, Quebec Hydro, Bell Telephone, the Canada Manpower Centre, the Unemployment Insurance office in Rivière-du-Loup, the Manpower Centre in Quebec City, Cabano, the Quebec social services centre, as well as Rivière-