

*Unemployment Insurance Act*

**Mr. Orlikow:** I was surprised to hear him say he would vote against this amendment because he thought it would act as a disincentive to people who were unemployed, in other words, discourage them from going back to work. I get the impression—I hope I am wrong—that the hon. member and many of his friends really believe there are a large number of people who are unemployed and who are drawing unemployment insurance benefit although in fact they do not wish to work.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Epp:** Right on!

**Mr. Orlikow:** The hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) says "hear, hear". I do not suggest for one moment that there are people who are unemployed and drawing unemployment insurance although they do not want to work. If I or the hon. member for Provencher were to believe that, we would have to assume there are more people in Newfoundland ripping off the system than there are in Manitoba. Over 20 per cent of the people of Newfoundland are unemployed, and the situation is almost the same in New Brunswick. Are those people more rapacious than the people of Manitoba or Saskatchewan? I do not believe they are.

● (1740)

There is a larger percentage of people in Quebec east of Montreal who are unemployed than there are between Montreal and the Ontario border. Are they ripping off the system more than the people in Montreal? I do not believe that. In November of this year 734,000 people in Canada were unemployed. This means there were almost 200,000 more people unemployed last month than there were in November of 1974. Are all these people less interested in working than they were in November 1974? I would not accept that for a moment.

There is less unemployment in cities like Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, and Toronto than there is in that part of Thunder Bay represented by the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras), or in St. John's, Newfoundland, or in many other one industry towns. The reason for this is not that the people in these places are less desirous of finding work; they are unemployed because the economy does not work to their advantage.

Members of the official opposition have joined with us in criticizing the government over the number of housing starts in Canada, which is substantially lower than last year. The number of housing starts in the United States, which buys a large part of its lumber needs from Canada, is down dramatically.

**Mr. Blais:** Is this a housing bill?

**Mr. Orlikow:** If the hon. member would open his ears and listen for a change, instead of interjecting as he does so frequently, he would very quickly catch the point I am trying to make. I have not yet spoken for five minutes, Mr. Speaker, so I do not think I am abusing the time of the House. The fact is that the lumber industry is in a depression. This means that lumber workers in Canada, not just those in British Columbia which had an NDP government but those also in North Bay, are unemployed and are now

[Mr. Orlikow.]

drawing unemployment insurance benefits. They want to work but the lumber market has gone soft. There were 750 miners in Sudbury recently laid off by Falconbridge and they are now drawing unemployment insurance benefits. They are unemployed because the international demand for metals like zinc, copper, and nickel has dropped.

I did say that in November 734,000 people were unemployed, but that figure is not a complete one. I do not blame Statistics Canada or the Department of Manpower and Immigration, but the fact is that we do not include our native people in our unemployment figures. I am sure I am not far wrong in saying that 80 per cent of our native people in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and northwestern Ontario are unemployed. I do not accept the suggestion of any hon. member, whether made inside or outside the House, that our native people do not want to work. The reason is that we have not developed programs that give them the opportunity to work.

When hon. members say they are opposed to this amendment because it will be a disincentive to work and will encourage people to stay on unemployment insurance, I say that in 95 per cent of the cases that is sheer nonsense. We would have full employment in Canada if the government set full employment as its objective. For the benefit of members who are so good at interjecting but so bad at making their own speech I shall not repeat the remarks I made last night when I quoted extensively a cabinet minister who had the fortune, or perhaps the misfortune, to be the manpower minister in 1971 when the last amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act were debated. At that time he bemoaned the fact that we had over 4 per cent unemployment, and he promised the people of Canada that the Liberal government would make as its major objective the decrease of unemployment. He said that figure was too high and was a disgrace for a country endowed with the resources Canada had.

We agreed with him at that time, yet today with the same Liberal government we have more than 7 per cent unemployment. Next year we could have between 7½ per cent and 8 per cent unemployment, perhaps more because none of us has yet been able to calculate the effects of the anti-inflation program implemented by the government which will undoubtedly mean more unemployment.

I know it is unpopular to tell the truth these days; in times of difficulty people like to put the blame on to somebody else. I have heard many people who are employed say that people who are not working could do so if they wanted. I say that is not the case. Secondly, I say that if we had a government that believed in full employment and which provided programs to put people to work, the number of people who cannot find work would be reduced very markedly.

Let me close by suggesting to the minister that he examine a proposal being made by Senator Hubert Humphrey of the United States. He came within one half of the one per cent of the votes required to be elected president of the United States. He has introduced a bill in the United States Congress, which will be debated very shortly, and which if enacted would make it the responsibility of the U.S. government to see there is full employment in that country. If private industry cannot be induced to employ all people who want to work in the United States, then the U.S.